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This is a translation of the " Preserved Tablet," the " Expanded Parchment," the Divine Charter, the Firman of the Merciful, that is, the Book of Ighan which hath emanated from the Supreme Pen and proceeded from the pure Lips of the " Blessed Beauty " (May my soul be a sacrifice to His Beloved Ones).

ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

کتاب ایقان

THE BOOK OF IGHAN

Revealed by

BAHA'U'LLAH

Translated by

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Assisted by

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INTRODUCTION

During the time of BAHĀ'U'LLĀH's residence in Baghdad the " Dwelling of Peace," before He declared Himself to be the " Manifestation of God," men of learning, including Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans visited Him, seeking answer to religious and scriptural questions. Among them was Haji-Mirza-Seyd-Mohammed of Shiraz, the maternal uncle of the BAB, who in 1862-63 was making a pilgrimage to the holy sanctuaries of the Imams, located in that region. His questions concerned the signs and evidences of the Expected Manifestation from the standpoint of his own religion—Islam. The Book of Ighan was revealed by BAHĀ'U'LLĀH in answer to his questions. According to the prevailing opinion of the Bahais, it was written in one night by the Supreme Pen.

It is certain that Persian pilgrims to the holy sanctuaries in Irak do not stop in Baghdad more than one day. Even if Haji-Seyd-Mohammed, as an exception to this custom, had remained in Baghdad a longer time, it is not probable that he could have attained to the presence of BAHĀ'U'LLĀH more than two or three times.

The Seyd submitted his questions through Haji-

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Seyd-Jawad of Karbila, one of the learned doctors of Irak, to whom BAHĀ'U'LLĀH had sent this message, "Let the maternal uncle of the BAB write down his questions; We will then write an answer to each." This strengthens the opinion as to the rapidity of the revelation of the Book.

By the Book of Ighan, BAHĀ'U'LLĀH has opened the teachings and scriptures of the Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians, Mohammedans, etc. For the doubts which had withheld the late Seyd from acknowledging the BAB are the same in substance which prevent other religionists from believing in the Manifestations of God. These doubts concern the "rising of the dead," "darkening of the sun and moon," "falling of stars," "cleaving asunder the heavens," the "new heaven and earth," etc. By the interpretation of these symbols, BAHĀ'U'LLĀH has unified the Religions and hoisted the banner of Peace among nations.

The translation herein is from the original Persian, reproduced from a copy of the Ighan revised in the presence of BAHĀ'U'LLĀH and approved by Him. The statements concerning the revelation of the Book are testified to by the Honorable Mirza-Abul-Fazl, a close friend of the late Haji-Seyd-Jawad of Karbila above mentioned.

ALI KULI KHAN.
(Ish'te'al Ebn-Kalanter).

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CHAPTER I

IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD, THE EXALTED, THE
SUPREME!

THE following chapter explains that verily the servants (of God) shall never attain to the shore of the Sea of Knowledge except by complete severance from all that is in the heavens and earth.

Sanctify yourselves O people of the earth, that perchance ye may attain to the station which God hath ordained for you and enter the tabernacle which God hath elevated in the Heaven of the Beyan.

The quintessence of this chapter is that travellers in the Path of Faith and seekers for the Cup of Assurance must sanctify and purify themselves from all material things; that is, the ear from hearing statements, the heart from doubts which pertain to the veils of glory (*sabahati jalal*¹), the soul from depend-

¹ Veils intervening between man and the Truth of God, which must be rent before the real light of that Truth is seen. One of these veils is literal interpretation of the Divine Texts preventing true understanding of Revelation, such as the statement of the ascent of Christ into Heaven, His descent, the station of Mohammed as the "Seal of the Prophets," etc.

ence upon worldly belongings, the eye from contemplating mere transitory words. They should thus proceed, trusting in God and relying upon Him, so that they may become fitted for the splendors of the effulgences of the Suns (Manifestations) of Divine Knowledge and Wisdom; recipients of the Invisible and Infinite Bounties. For should a servant desire to make the words, deeds and actions of other servants, learned or ignorant, the standard for knowing God and His Chosen Ones, he shall never enter the Rizwan of the Knowledge of the Lord of Might nor attain to the Fountains of the Knowledge and Wisdom of the King of Oneness; neither shall he reach the bourne of immortality nor partake of the Cup of Nearness and Good Pleasure.

Consider the former days; how people both high and low were awaiting the Manifestations of Oneness in the Holy Temples, so that they were at all times and moments in anticipation and expectancy, praying and supplicating that perchance the breeze of the Divine Mercy might blow and the beauty of the Promised One step from the Pavilion of the Invisible into the Court of Appearance. But when the clouds of generosity lifted and the doors of favor opened and the Sun of the Invisible appeared from the Horizon of Power, they denied Him and avoided His Meeting which was identical with the Meeting of God. These details are recorded in the Heavenly Books.

Now reflect a moment as to the cause of this rejection by the people, after their seeking and anxiety. They even denied and opposed in such manner that tongue and pen fail and are unable to explain. Not one of these Manifestations of Holiness and Dawning-places of Singleness hath appeared without being subjected to the contradictions, denials and antagonism of the people. As it is said, "O the misery of men! No Messenger cometh unto them but they laugh him to scorn" (K. S. 36). It is said in another place: "Each nation hatched ill designs against their Messenger that they might get him into their power; and they disputed with vain reasoning, that they might thereby invalidate the truth" (K. S. 40).

Likewise the revealed Words which have descended from the clouds of the Eternal Power and from the realm of Divine Might are beyond the limit of the knowledge and comprehension of the servants. For the spiritually minded and possessors of perception, the Surat of Hud (Koran) is sufficient. Meditate ye upon that blessed Surat and consider attentively the essential nature, that ye may be informed of the wonders of the affairs of the Prophets and the opposition and denial by words of rejection. Perchance ye may cause the people to fly from the abode of selfish heedlessness to the Nest of Unity and Divine Knowledge; and may drink the clear water of Eternal Wisdom and partake of the fruits of the Tree of the Knowledge of the Lord of Glory. This

is allotted to abstracted souls from the Holy Eternal Table sent down (from Heaven). Should ye become aware of the affliction of the Prophets and the motive and reason of the contradiction of those Divine Suns by the servants, ye will be cognizant of many things. The more ye consider the contradictions of the Day-springs of the Suns of the Attributes of Oneness by the people, the more firm and strong ye will become in your religion and in the Cause of God. Accordingly some of the stories of the Prophets are briefly recorded in these Tablets, to demonstrate and make evident that in all times and ages, they inflicted upon the Appearances of Power and Dawning-places of Might that which the pen is ashamed to relate. Perchance these statements may enable some of the people to avoid the perplexity arising from contradiction and denial by the learned and ignorant of the age, and thus increase their assurance and faith.

One of the Prophets was Noah, who admonished (lit. lamented) for nine hundred and fifty years and summoned the servants into the peaceful valley of the Spirit; yet no one responded to Him. Each day they scoffed at His Holiness in derision and inflicted so much distress and injury upon that blessed being that they felt certain of His destruction. As it is said, "And as often as a company of his people passed by him, they derided him: but, he said, Though ye scoff at us now, we will scoff at you here-

after as ye scoff at us and ye shall surely know " (K. S. 11).

Afterward He repeatedly promised His followers the descent of victory at an appointed time, the fulfilment of which became "bada."¹ Some of His few followers turned away from Him because of this non-fulfilment. These details are recorded in most of the well-known books which have been and will be read. Finally there remained with His Holiness but forty or seventy-two souls, as stated in the books and traditions. At length He cried out saying, "O my Lord, leave not any families of the unbelievers upon the earth" (K. S. 71).

Ponder a little as to why these servants contradicted and shunned Him during this time and did not attain nor become honored with the robes of Affirmation by abandoning the garment of Negation; also why the Divine promises became "bada," causing some of those who had followed Him to turn back. Much reflection is necessary that ye may become cognizant of the mysteries of invisible things, inhale a sweet odor from the fragrance of the ideal rose-garden, and acknowledge that the tests of God have been and ever will be upon His servants. Thus light may be known and distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, guidance from error, happi-

¹ "Bada" literally signifies "appearing in the mind," but in this connection it means the failing of fulfilment of a prophetic announcement, due to the change of Divine purpose.

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ness from despair, and roses from thorns. It is written, "Do men imagine that it shall be sufficient for them to say 'We believe,' while they be not proved (or tested)" (K. S. 29)?

After Noah, the beauty of Hud shone forth from the Day-spring of Creation. For seven hundred years or more, according to different statements, He summoned the people to the Rizwan of Nearness of the Lord of Glory. Like copious rain, calamities fell upon Him. The greater His zeal in summoning, the more obstinate their denial. The more strenuous His effort, the more pronounced their disdain. "And their unbelief shall only increase the perdition of the unbelievers" (K. S. 35).

Then the Temple of Saleh stepped forth from the Invisible Rizwan of Reality and called the servants to the river of Eternal Nearness. During one hundred years or more, He commanded them to obey the precepts of God and shun prohibited things. Nothing resulted and no effect was produced. Several times He secluded Himself. All this, notwithstanding that Eternal Beauty was summoning the people to no other than the City of Unity. It is said, "And unto the tribe of Thamud we sent their brother Saleh. He said unto them, O my people, worship God; ye have no God besides Him . . . They answered; O Saleh, Thou art a person on whom we placed our hopes before this. Dost thou forbid us to worship that which our fathers worshipped?"

But we are certainly in doubt concerning the religion to which thou dost invite us, as justly to be expected " (K. S. 7). All this proved fruitless and finally a terrible noise caused them to die (Koran).

Afterward the beauty of the " Friend " (Abraham) was unveiled and the standard of Guidance was hoisted. He invited the people of the earth unto the light of righteousness. Although He diligently admonished them, no fruit but jealousy and heedlessness resulted. But those who were entirely devoted to God soared with the wings of Assurance unto the station which God hath exalted beyond all comprehension. It is well known from the history of His Holiness (Abraham) how He was surrounded by enemies, until the fire of jealousy and contradiction was kindled. After the story of the " fire " (Koran), they expelled that Divine Lamp from the city, as is recorded in all the books and epistles.

Then His time passed and the turn of Moses came. His Holiness appeared with the Rod of Command and with the White Hand of Knowledge from the Paran of Divine Love. He came with the Serpent of Power and Eternal Majesty out of the Sinai of Light into the court of Manifestation, summoning all in the world to the Kingdom of Life and to the fruits of the Tree of Faithfulness. The oppositions made by Pharaoh and his people have been heard of. Many stones of suspicion were cast upon that pure

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Tree by unbelieving souls. Finally Pharaoh and his people exerted themselves to extinguish that fire of the Divine Tree with the water of denial and opposition; heedless that the fire of the Divine Wisdom is never quenched by material water nor the lamp of Supreme Power extinguished by contrary winds. Nay rather, in such a case water produces conflagration and the wind insures preservation, were ye to perceive with discerning sight and walk in the Good Pleasure of God.

What a beautiful explanation was that given by a believer of the family of Pharaoh, the story of which the Lord of Might hath related to His beloved ones: "A man who was a true believer of the family of Pharaoh, and concealed his faith, said, Will ye put a man to death, because he saith, God is my Lord? Seeing he is come unto you with evident signs from your Lord? If he be a liar, on him will the punishment of falsehood alight; but if he speaketh the truth, some of those judgments with which he threateneth you will fall upon you; verily God doth not guide him who is a transgressor or liar" (K. S. 40).

At length the matter reached such an extreme that they martyred this same believer with the severest torture. "Shall not the curse of God fall upon the unjust?"

Now reflect a little upon these things, and as to the cause of such differences: that when a true Manifestation appeared in the world from the Horizon

of the Placeless, such corruption, confusion, oppression and revolution would arise in all parts of the world. All the Prophets during their appearance, announced to the people the coming of another Prophet and recorded a sign for the subsequent Manifestation, as stated in the Books. Why, then, notwithstanding the search and expectation of the people for the Holy Manifestation and the mention of signs in the Books, should such things occur in the world as oppressing, antagonizing and persecuting the Prophets and Chosen Ones during every age and cycle? As it is written, "Whenever a Messenger cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye proudly reject him; accusing some of imposture and slaying others" (K. S. 2).

Now consider what was the reason of these deeds and why they acted in this manner toward the Aspects of the Beauty of the Glorious One. The same thing which led to the contradiction and heedlessness of the servants in those days causes the negligence of these servants now. If we say that the divine proofs were not perfect and complete and therefore caused contradiction, this is pure anathema, because it is far from the bounty of the Bounteous and remote from the abundant Mercy to choose one soul from among all the servants, for the guidance of His creatures, without bestowing upon Him sufficient and perfect proofs; at the same time punishing people for not believing in Him. Nay, the generosity of the King

of Existence hath embraced all the contingent beings through the appearance of the Manifestations of Himself. His Abundance never ceases for a moment and the showers of His Mercy from the clouds of Providence are never restrained. Consequently these things proceed only from limited souls who move in the valley of pride and haughtiness and wander in the deserts of remoteness; who follow their own suppositions and whatever they hear from their religious doctors. Therefore they accomplish nothing but opposition and seek no result but rejection.

It is evident to everyone endowed with perception, that had those servants during the appearance of each Manifestation of the Sun of Truth, sanctified and purified their eyes and hearts from whatever they had seen, heard and conceived, they undoubtedly would not have been deprived of the Divine Beauty and withheld from the Sanctuary of Nearness and Union with the Dawning-places of Holiness. As in every age they compared the proof with knowledge acquired from their religious doctors and found it to be at variance with their limited understandings, these unseemly actions proceeded from them in the world of appearance. The religious doctors of every age have been the cause of preventing the people from the shore of the Sea of Oneness, for the reins of the people were in their control. Some among them have hindered the people by love of leadership and some by lack of wisdom and knowledge. Thus every Proph-

et hath quaffed the cup of martyrdom and soared to the loftiest horizon of Might, through the sentence and sanction of the divines of the age. What oppressions have been inflicted by the leaders of the time and divines of the age upon the Kings of Existence and the Essences of Desire! Satisfied with these limited and transient days, they were debarred from the everlasting realm, their eyes deprived from witnessing the lights of the beauty of the Beloved and their ears from hearing the wonderful melodies of the Nightingale of Desire. Therefore the condition of the divines of every age is recorded in all the Heavenly Books; as it is said in the Koran: "O ye people of the Book, why do ye reject the Signs of God, while ye are the witnesses of them" (K. S. 3)? Also, "O ye people of the Book, why do ye clothe truth with vanity, and knowingly hide the truth" (K. S. 3)? Also, in another place, "Say, O people of the Book, why do ye bar the path of God" (K. S. 3)?

It is evident that the "people of the Book" who barred mankind from the right path were the divines of that age, whose names and records are contained in all the writings and understood from most of the verses and traditions, were ye to see with the eye of God.

So gaze with Divine Insight into the horizons of the Supreme Knowledge and into the souls of the perfect words of Eternity, that all the mysteries of the spiritual Wisdom may appear without "veils of

glory " and become manifest from behind the covering of Favor and Bounty. The contradictions of people and their controversies have resulted wholly from their lack of knowledge and understanding. For example, they could not comprehend and attain to the truth of the explanations given by the beautiful Countenances of the True One concerning the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. Thus they hoisted the standard of corruption and lifted the banner of sedition. It is evident that only the Eternal Temples apprehend the interpretation of the words uttered by the Doves of Eternity; and it is only the hearing of the people of immortality which can detect the melodies of the Nightingale of Reality. The Copts¹ of tyranny have no portion of the wine of the Septs² of justice; and the Pharaoh of unbelief will never view the White Hand of Moses; as it is said: "None knoweth the interpretation thereof except God and those who are well grounded in knowledge" (K. S. 3). Notwithstanding this, they have sought interpretation of the Book from the people of veils and did not acquire knowledge from its fountain-head. For instance, when the day of Moses had passed and the lights of Jesus pervaded the world from the dawn of Spirit, the Jews objected that the one who is promised in the Pentateuch must promote and fulfil the laws of the Pentateuch, whereas this youth of Nazareth who calls himself the Messiah of God hath abol-

¹ Unbelievers in the time of Moses.

² Tribes of Israel.

ished the laws of divorce and of the Sabbath, which are the greatest laws of Moses; and moreover the signs of the Manifestation have not yet appeared. Thus the Jews are still expecting the appearance recorded in the Pentateuch. How many of the Holy Manifestations of Unity and Dawning-places of the Light of Eternity have appeared since Moses in the world of creation, while the Jews have been and are still veiled by their satanic, egotistical veils and their selfish erroneous opinions! They still await the time when this fictitious temple will appear according to their understanding of the given signs. Consequently God hath punished them for their sin, stripped them of the spirit of faith and caused them to suffer the fire in the depths of hell on account of their ignorance of the texts recorded in the Pentateuch concerning the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. Since they did not understand the reality of these signs and as such things did not outwardly appear, they were therefore deprived of the beauty of Jesus, did not attain to the Meeting of God and were of those who await. Thus the nations by their adherence to similar inventions arising from improper notions, have deprived themselves of the pure, clear and flowing fountains.

In unfolding these mysteries, We have mentioned some of the texts of the Prophets in wonderful harmonies of Hijaz (Arabic) in former Tablets written to one of the believers. In these pages We again

speak of them in cheerful melodies of Irak (Persian) at thy request. Perchance this may guide those athirst in the deserts of remoteness to the Sea of Nearness and those wandering in the wilderness of separation and abandonment to the Tents of Presence and Union. Thus the clouds of error may be removed and the world-illuminating Sun of Guidance dawn from the horizon of the soul. We trust in God, seeking His assistance. Perchance there may flow from this pen that whereby the minds of the people will be quickened until they arise from their beds of heedlessness and, through the permission of God, hear the warble of the Nightingales of Paradise from the Tree planted in the Rizwan of Unity by the Hands of Power.

It hath been evident and clear to the possessors of Knowledge that when the fire of the love of Jesus burned the veils of Jewish limitations, and the authority of His Holiness, even in the outward sense was partially recognized, that Beauty of the Invisible spoke of separation to some of His spiritual companions and enkindled the fire of yearning, saying: "I go and I come again." And in another place he said: "I go and another will come who will tell you all that I have not told you and will finish all that I have said." These two statements are in reality one, were ye to witness the Manifestations of Oneness with the eye of God.

To one who views with ideal perception, the Book

of Jesus as well as His Cause were in fact confirmed at the time of the "Seal of the prophets" (Mohammed). In name, Mohammed said "I am Jesus," even ratifying the signs, records and Book of Jesus as being from the presence of God. In this sense there is neither any difference in them nor in their Books, inasmuch as both have arisen by the command of God, speaking the praise of God. The Books of both declared the ordinances of God. For this reason Jesus said "I will go and come again." Even as the sun : If the sun of to-day says "I am the sun of yesterday," it is true; and yet if according to daily sequence, it says "I am other than the sun of yesterday," this is also true. Likewise consider the days: If it be said that all the days are the same, it is correct and true; and if it be said that according to name and designation they differ from each other, this also is true as thou seest. For though they are the same, yet in each one there is a name, quality and designation which is different from the other. By the same method and explanation, understand the stations of separation, difference and oneness of the Holy Manifestations, so that thou mayest comprehend the interpretations of the words of the Creator of the Names and Attributes, concerning separation and union. Thus wilt thou fully discover the answer to thy question why that Eternal Beauty hath, in various instances, called Himself by a different name and title.

Afterward the companions and disciples of His Holiness (Jesus) asked Him concerning the sign of the Return and the Manifestation, and at what time this sign shall appear. The same question was asked that peerless Countenance upon several occasions, and His Holiness in each instance mentioned a certain sign, as recorded in the four Gospels.

This Oppressed One now speaks of one of these instances, thus conferring the hidden benefits of the Tree of Reward (lit. stored up tree) for the sake of God, upon His servants; so that the mortal temples may not be deprived of the immortal fruits and may perchance attain to a sprinkling of the never-failing rivers of the Lord of Glory, which are flowing in Baghdad, "the abode of peace." We ask neither recompense nor reward. "We feed you for the sake of God only, We desire no recompense from you nor any thanks" (K. S. 76). This is a food whereby brilliant souls and minds find eternal life and this is that table of which it is spoken: "O our Lord, cause to descend upon us food from Heaven" (K. S. 5)! This food is never withheld from those who deserve it and is never exhausted. It grows continually from the Tree of Grace and descends from the Heavens of Justice and Mercy. As it is said: "Dost thou not see how God putteth forth a parable: a good word is as a good tree whose root is firmly fixed in the earth and whose branches reach unto Heaven; which bringeth forth its fruit in all seasons" (K. S. 14).

Alas that man should withhold himself from this excellent gift and deprive himself of this eternal bounty and perpetual life! Therefore let him appreciate the value of this ideal food; perchance the dead bodies may receive new life through the wonderful favors of that Sun of Truth and faded souls may develop into the incomparable Spirit. O my brother, effort is needful while yet the days remain, in order to taste the Cups of Eternity. The breeze of life from the city of the Beloved will not blow continually; the rivers of explanation will not forever flow, and the doors of the Rizwan will not always remain open. The time will come when the Nightingales of Paradise will fly from the holy garden to Divine Nests; then thou wilt neither see the beauty of the Rose nor hear the melody of the Nightingale! Therefore while the Dove of Eternity is singing and rejoicing, and the Divine Springtime is in splendor and adornment, avail thyself of the opportunity and deprive not the ear of the heart, of its melody. This is the advice of this servant to your Honor and to the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him advance and whosoever wisheth, let him deny; verily God is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness.

These are the melodies sung by Jesus the Son of Mary with glorious notes in the Rizwan of the Gospel, as to the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. When they asked concerning these signs, He an-

swered them, according to the first book ascribed to Matthew (xxiv. 29-31) :

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the earth shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.” The translation of this in Persian¹ is that after the distress and tribulation which shall surround all the people, the sun shall be withheld from shining, that is, be darkened, and the moon cease to give light, the stars of heaven will descend upon earth and the pillars of the earth will be shaken. At that time, the signs of the Son of Man shall appear in Heaven, that is, the Promised Beauty and Substance of Life shall come from the Court of the Invisible to the visible world. And He (Jesus) says: at that time, all the multitudes who inhabit the earth shall lament and bewail and the people shall see that Beauty of Oneness coming from Heaven riding upon the cloud with power, grandeur and a great gift, sending His angels with the mighty sound of a trumpet. The same statements are recorded in the other three Gospels

¹The passage is quoted by BAHÁ'U' LLAH in Arabic and interpreted in Persian.

ascribed to Mark, Luke and John. As these have been mentioned in detail in the Arabic Tablets, We do not undertake to mention them here, but confine ourselves to one of them. As the doctors of the Gospel did not understand the meanings of these statements and the purport deposited in these words, but adhered to their literal sense, they were therefore withheld from the river of the Mohammedic Bounty and the cloud of Ahmadi¹ Grace. The ignorant ones of that community, relying upon their learned men, were likewise prevented from beholding the beauty of the King of Glory. For these mentioned signs did not become manifest at the appearance of the Ahmadi Sun. Finally that Essence of Life returned to the eternal place of His Dominion. Centuries passed and times rolled by. Another blow of spiritual breath was breathed into the Divine Trumpet and dead souls came forth out of the tombs of heedlessness and error into the land of guidance and the place of favor. Still that community is expecting the time when these signs shall appear and the promised Temple (Christ) shall arise, that they may assist Him, expend possessions in His way and sacrifice lives in His path. By similar suppositions, other communities are kept afar from the Kawther of the Significances of the Infinite Mercy of God and are occupied with their own imagination. Besides this passage, there is another statement in the Gospel:

¹ "Ahmad" was one of the titles of Mohammed.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away.” The meaning of this in Persian is that it is possible for the heaven and earth to pass away and be destroyed, whereas “My words” shall never pass away but shall always be fixed and permanent among mankind. For this reason the people of the Gospel say the decree of the Gospel shall never be abolished and that whenever the promised Face appears with all the signs, He must confirm and establish the law enacted in the Gospel, so that no other religion may remain in the world. To them this is one of the confirmed and indisputable facts. They believe that even should one appear with all the promised signs and declare against the literal law of the Gospel, they must not obey or accept him, nay rather, they must scoff at him and charge him with infidelity. This was witnessed when the Moham-medic Sun appeared. Had they asked with all meekness from the Appearances of Oneness in every Manifestation, the meanings of these words revealed in the Books,—through the non-attainment unto which all people are veiled from the Furthermost Destination and the Sadrat-El-Muntaha,—they would have been surely directed to the lights of the Sun of Guidance and acquainted with the mysteries of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Now this servant explains a sprinkling of the meanings of these statements, so that the possessors of perception and intuition may thereby comprehend all

the symbols of the Divine words and the allegorical explanations of the Holy Manifestations; and thus be not debarred on account of the (impressive) majesty of the words, from the Sea of the Names and Attributes and veiled from the Lamp of Unity which is the place of the manifestation of The Essence.

As to the words—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days"—this signifies the time when the people become afflicted with hardship and distress. This is when the traces of the Sun of Truth and the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge and Wisdom disappear from among mankind and the reins of the people fall into the hands of the ignorant; when the doors of Unity and Knowledge—the essential purpose of the creation of man—are closed; when Knowledge is changed into superstition and guidance into adversity, just as it is witnessed in this day that the reins of every party are in the hands of an ignorant one who leads them in whatever way he desires. Among them nothing remains of the Adored One but a name and of the Desired One but the letter. To such an extent have the winds of desire and self prevailed, that they have extinguished the lights of reason and conscience within the hearts. Although the doors of the Divine Knowledge are opened by the keys of the Supreme Power, and the essences of the being of things are enlightened and illumined through the knowledge-light and holy bounties, to such an extent that within everything a door of knowledge

is opened and within every atom traces of the sun are visible, yet notwithstanding these knowledge manifestations have pervaded the world, they have considered the door of knowledge closed, and the rains of mercy withheld. Holding fast to supposition, they are kept afar from the firm Strong Handle of Knowledge. They seem to have intrinsically no desire for knowledge and its door, nor think of its appearance. For in supposition and imagination they have found doors to bread, and in the appearance of the Manifestor of Knowledge they see nothing except the sacrifice of life. So they naturally flee from this and hold fast to the other. Although they know the Divine Command is One, yet from every direction a decree emanates and from every place an order is brought forth. No two are found who agree upon the same command, for they seek no God but desire and follow no path but error. They deem leadership the ultimate accomplishment of the aim and account pride and haughtiness as final attainment to the Beloved. They consider selfish deceptions preferable to the Divine decrees. They have turned aside from submission and resignation and are occupied with plots and hypocrisies; preserving these attitudes with all power and strength, lest a blemish find access to their dignity or a flaw appear in their honor. Should an eye be illumined by the collyrium of Divine enlightenments, it would behold a number of wild beasts preying upon the dead bodies of the

servants. What tribulations and distress could be greater than these mentioned conditions? For if one wishes to seek a truth or knowledge, he knows not to whom to refer nor from whom to enquire, because opinions are different and paths are many. This tribulation and distress is one of the signs of every Manifestation, and unless it happens, the Sun of Truth does not become manifest, because the morn of the appearance of Guidance dawns after the night of error. Therefore the traditions and records contain all these statements, that infidelity will cover the world, darkness prevail and similar things as mentioned. For the sake of brevity this servant does not undertake to mention the texts of these traditions, as they are well known.

If the people understand this tribulation (lit. narrowness) to mean that the earth should become contracted, or other things which they have shaped in their imagination, this will never be realized and they will necessarily say that this condition hath not appeared,—just as they have said and are still saying. Briefly, by tribulation is meant the narrowness (difficulty in attainment) of Divine Knowledges and understanding the Supreme Words. In the days of the disappearance of the Sun and His mirrors,¹ the servants fall into narrowness and hardship, knowing not to whom they should turn; as hath been said.

¹ A Prophet and His immediate successors; as Christ and His disciples, et. al.

Therefore We make known unto thee the interpretation of the traditions and reveal unto thee the mysteries of Wisdom, so that thou mayst be informed of the purport and become of those who have drunk from the cup of Knowledge and Wisdom!

As to the words—"The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall cease to give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven:"—The purport of "sun" and "moon" as mentioned in the words of the Prophets is not confined to the phenomenal sun and moon which are seen; nay rather, they have intended for "sun" and "moon" manifold meanings. In every instance they intend a certain meaning applicable thereto. For example, one meaning of the "sun" is the "Suns of Truth" which dawn from the Day-spring of Pre-existence and transmit bounty to all the contingent beings. These Suns of Truth are the Universal Manifestations of the Divinity in the world of His Attributes and Names. As by the command of the Real Adored One the development of material things such as fruits, trees, colors, minerals and whatever exists in the phenomenal world is through the assistance of the phenomenal sun, so the Trees of Unity, the Fruits of Oneness, the Leaves of Abstraction, the Flowers of Knowledge and Assurance and the Myrtles of Wisdom and Utterance appear through the training of the Ideal Suns. Therefore when these Suns arise, the world is renewed, the

rivers of Life flow, the seas of Beneficence move, the clouds of Grace gather and the breezes of Bounty blow upon the temples of beings. Through the heat of these Divine Suns and Ideal Fires the heat of the love of God is produced in the pillars of the world; and through the favor of these abstracted Spirits the immortal Spirit of Life is conferred upon the bodies of the mortal dead.

The phenomenal sun is in reality a single sign of the splendor of that Ideal Sun which hath neither comparison, likeness, equal nor peer. All things are supported through Its existence, are manifest through Its bounty and will return to It. All things have appeared from It and are restored to the treasures of Its command. All contingent beings originated from It and revert to the depositories of Its order. If in explanation and mentioning, these (Suns) are only designated by some of the Names and Attributes, as you have heard and hear, this is intended for the understanding of weak and imperfect minds. Otherwise they have been eternally sanctified from every name and will be purified from every attribute. The essences of names have no access to the court of their holiness and subtleties of attributes have no approach to the kingdom of their might. God is too glorified for His Chosen Ones to be known except by their own selves, or that His Friends should be described by any other than their own beings. He is exalted far above what the servants mention in description

of them and lofty above their comprehension of them!

In the writings of the "Immaculate Ones" (Imams), the word "Suns" is frequently applied to those Abstracted Lights (Manifestations). One of these applications is found in the prayer "Nudba"¹— "Where are the rising Suns? Where are the brilliant Moons? Where are the shining Stars?" Therefore it is shown that in the primary sense "sun," "moon" and "stars" signify the Prophets, the saints and their companions, through the light of whose knowledges the worlds of the visible and invisible are enlightened and illumined. In another sense, by "sun," "moon," and "star" is intended the divines of the former Dispensation at the time of the subsequent Manifestation and in whose hands are the reins of the religion of the people. If they are illumined by the light of the subsequent Sun in His Manifestation, they will be acceptable, radiant and shining; otherwise they will be declared as darkened, even though they are apparently guides. For all these states, including belief and unbelief, guidance and error, happiness and misery, light and darkness are dependent upon the approval of that Ideal Sun of Divinity. If in the Day of Judgment (Day of a new Manifestation), any one of these divines is declared faithful by the Source of Wisdom, he can truly be regarded as possessing knowledge, light and faith, and as having

¹ "Lamentation." Written by Ali.

attained the Good Pleasure of God. Otherwise ignorance, rejection, infidelity and injustice will be applied to him.

It is evident to every perceiving one that as the light of a star is effaced by the rising of the phenomenal sun, so the sun of outward knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment is effaced and obscured by the dawning of the Sun of Truth. The word "sun" is applied to the divines on account of their loftiness, distinction and renown. Such are the approved divines of the age who are notable in countries and recognized among the servants. If they become expressive of the Divine Sun, they are accounted as "exalted suns"; otherwise they are suns of the lowest abyss; as it is said: "The sun and the moon will return to hell" (K. S. 55). Ye have undoubtedly heard the meaning of "sun" and "moon" as recorded in this verse and there is no need to speak of it. Whosoever is of the element of this "sun" and "moon," that is, who advances toward falsehood and turns away from the Truth, hath appeared from hell and will return to it.

Therefore O questioner, we must hold fast to the Strong Handle, that perchance we may turn from the night of error to the light of guidance, flee from the shadow of negation and seek the shelter of affirmation, be delivered from the fire of the infernal abyss and illumined by the light of the beauty of His Highness the Gracious. In this manner We bestow upon

you the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge, so that ye may be of those who are enlivened in the Rizwan of the Wisdom of God.

In another sense the words "sun," "moon" and "stars" are applied to the ordinances and instructions enacted in every religion. Such are prayer and fasting, which since the disappearance of the beauty of Mohammed are greater and stronger than all the ordinances in the law of the Koran. This point is indicated by the records and traditions, and on account of its familiarity, mention of it is unnecessary. Nay in every age the command of Prayer hath been established and observed. It is recorded by the Lights (Imams) risen from the Sun of Mohammed that in every cycle the command of Prayer hath descended to the Prophets, although in each Dispensation it was particularized by a different form and new ceremonies, according to the requirements of the time. As in every subsequent Manifestation the established, shining, clear and fixed ceremonies, customs and instructions of the preceding Manifestation are abolished, they symbolically mentioned them by the names "sun" and "moon." "That He might prove you and see which of you would excel in good works" (K. S. 67).

The words "sun" and "moon" in the traditions are also applied to prayer and fasting, as it is said: "Fasting is radiance (sun) and prayer is light." One day We were seated in a certain place, when a well-

known divine entered and incidentally mentioned this tradition, saying: "Since fasting causes heat in the system, it is therefore interpreted brilliancy which is 'sun'; and as the prayer of night produces cold, it is interpreted light which is 'moon.'" We realized that the needy one had not enjoyed a single drop of the sea of Significances nor attained a single spark of the fire of the Sadrat of Divine Wisdom. After a time, We declared in the most courteous way: "All your Eminence said regarding the meaning of this tradition is upon the tongues and lips of the people, but perhaps by it another meaning is also intended." Then he asked for explanation and it was said: "The Seal of the Prophets, the Master of the Chosen Ones hath likened the religion of the Koran to Heaven because of its exaltation, loftiness and greatness, and because it embraces all Religions. As in the phenomenal heaven two great and mighty pillars are fixed which are the luminaries called sun and moon, so likewise two orbs are ordained in the Heaven of Religion, which are fasting and prayer. "Islam is Heaven; fasting is its sun and prayer is its moon."

Briefly; this is the purpose of the symbolisms in the words of the Divine Manifestations. Consequently the application of these meanings to "sun" and "moon" in the mentioned instances is confirmed and demonstrated through revealed verses and recorded traditions. Therefore by the "darkness of

the sun and moon " and the " falling of stars " is intended the aberration of the divines and the abolition of the ordinances established in a religion, of which the Manifestation of a Dispensation speaks through these symbols. Only the righteous have a portion of this cup and only the just partake thereof. " Verily the just shall drink of a cup mixed with cafur " ¹ (K. S. 76).

It is certain that during every subsequent Manifestation, the " sun " of the teachings, ordinances, commands and prohibitions established in the preceding Manifestation,—the " sun " and " moon " of teachings and command under which the people of that age are enlightened and guided,—become darkened, that is their influence and efficiency vanish. Now consider, had the people of the Gospel understood the purpose of " sun " and " moon " or inquired concerning it from the Manifestor of Divine Knowledge, without contradiction or obstinacy, the meanings thereof would have necessarily become clear and they would not have been confined in the darkness of egotism and desire. Yea, since they did not acquire the knowledge from its mine and source, they perished in the fatal valley of unbelief and error, and are not yet aware that all the signs appeared and the promised Sun dawned from the horizon of Manifestation, while the sun and moon of former knowledges, ordinances and teachings were darkened and disappeared.

¹ Camphor, a fountain in Paradise.

Now step into the path of indubitable Truth with the eye of positive Knowledge and the wings of actual Certainty. "Say, God sent it down, then leave them to amuse themselves with their vain discourse" (K. S. 6). Thus thou mayest be accounted of those companions of whom it is said: "As for those who say Our Lord is God and who act steadfastly; the Angels shall descend unto them" (K. S. 41). Then shalt thou witness all these mysteries with thine own eye.

O my brother, take the step of the Soul, that thou mayest in a moment traverse the distant valleys of separation and remoteness, enter the Rizwan of Union and Nearness and in a breath attain to the Divine Souls. These stages can never be travelled nor the destination reached by the step of the body. Peace be upon those who follow the Truth in truth and stand in the path of Command upon the shore of Knowledge in the Name of God. This is the meaning of the blessed verse: "I swear by the Lord of the Easts and the Wests" (K. S. 70), for there is a place of dawning and a place of setting for every one of these mentioned Suns. As the doctors of commentary were not informed of the real meaning of these Suns, they failed to interpret this verse. Some asserted that as the sun rises every day from a point different from that of the preceding day, therefore He hath mentioned ("easts and wests") in the plural. Others have written that the four seasons are in-

tended, as at every season the sun rises from a certain place and sets in another, so "east" and "west" are spoken of. This is the degree of the knowledge of the servants and yet what ignorances and defects they ascribe to the Essences of Knowledge and the Subtleties of Wisdom.

In like manner through these clear, firm, well-founded and direct explanations understand the "cleaving of Heaven" which is one of the signs of the Hour of Resurrection: As it is said: "When the Heaven shall be cloven asunder" (K. S. 82). By this is meant the Heaven of Religions elevated during every Dispensation and cloven asunder in every subsequent Manifestation, that is, abolished and annulled. I swear by God that to one who carefully considers, the cleaving asunder of this Heaven is greater than the cleaving of the phenomenal heaven. Reflect a little; a long-established religion, under which all have grown and developed; by the shining ordinances of which they have been trained for long periods; hearing nothing from their fathers and ancestors except its mention, so that the eyes see only the effectiveness of its commands and ears hear only its ordinances; then afterward one appearing, severing and separating all these through Divine power and strength, nay rather, abolishing them. Consider whether this is of greater importance than that which these worthless creatures have imagined concerning the cleaving of heaven. Moreover, consider the

difficulties and afflictions of these Countenances in executing the laws of God in face of all in the earth, without a worldly helper or assister. Notwithstanding the persecutions inflicted upon these pure, high and blessed Beings, they endure with the utmost power and suffer with infinite strength.

In like manner understand the meaning of the "changing of the earth." Upon whatever hearts the clouds of mercy of that Heaven poured down the shower of beneficence, the earth of those hearts was changed into the earth of Knowledge and Wisdom. What Myrtles of Unity have grown in the gardens of these hearts and what Anemones of Realities of Knowledge and Wisdom bloom from these shining breasts! If the earth of these hearts is not changed, how is it that men not instructed in one letter, without seeing a teacher or entering a school, speak words and knowledges which no one can apprehend? They seem to have been moulded from the clay of Eternal Knowledge and kneaded with the water of Intuitive Wisdom. Therefore it is said, "Knowledge is a light which God sheds in whatsoever heart He willeth." It is this kind of Knowledge which is praiseworthy; not the limited learnings produced by veiled and obscured imaginations, which men often steal from each other, then glory over their fellow-creatures.

O that the breasts of the servants might be purified and sanctified from the traces of these limitations and dark words, that they may perchance attain to the

splendor of the lights of the Sun of Knowledge and Significances and to the essences of the mysteries of Intuitive Wisdom!

Consider, if these barren soils of being had not been transformed, how could the mysteries of Unity and the essences of Divinity have appeared and become visible in them? Therefore it is said in the Koran: "In that day, the earth shall be changed into another earth" (K. S. 14).

Even the material earth is also changed through the breezes of the generosity of that King of Existence, were ye to reflect upon the mysteries of Manifestation!

Comprehend the meaning of the verse: "Since the whole earth shall be but His handful in the Day of Resurrection and the Heavens (shall be) rolled together in His right Hand. Praise be unto Him and far may He be exalted above the (idols) which they associate (with Him)" (K. S. 39). The purport of this verse is that the whole earth is grasped in His Hand in the Day of Judgment and the Heaven is enfolded in His Right Hand.

Now justice is needed! If the purpose be that which the people understand, what good will result from it? Moreover it is certain that a hand visible to the material sight, accomplishing these things, could not be ascribed to The Essence; nay rather, to acknowledge such a thing is pure infidelity and sheer falsehood. If it be said that it is His Manifestations

who are employed in this matter in the Day of Judgment, this is also very improbable and useless. Nay, by the "earth" is meant the earth of knowledge and wisdom; and by "heavens," the Heavens of Religions. Consider how He hath controlled the formerly expanded earth of knowledge and wisdom by the grasp of Power and Authority, and hath spread a new and incomparable earth in the hearts of the servants, causing new myrtles, wonderful flowers and lofty trees to spring up within their shining breasts.

In like manner consider how the Heavens of the formerly established Religions are rolled together in the Right Hand of Power, the Heaven of the Beyan is hoisted aloft by the command of God and adorned with the sun, moon and stars of wonderful and new commandments!

These are the mysteries of the words which are clearly unfolded and unveiled that thou mayest comprehend the Morn of Significances and extinguish the lamp of superstition, fancy, doubt and suspicion through the power of reliance and severance, and light the new lamp of Knowledge and Assurance in the recess of mind and heart.

The purpose of these allegorical words and enigmatic references which emanate from the Command-Sources is to test the servants as mentioned, so that the soil of excellent and shining hearts may be distinguished from barren and mortal soils. This has

always been the Divine Law among the servants, as revealed in the Books.

Likewise consider the verse of "Kiblah."¹ After the Hegira of the Sun of Mohammedic Prophethood from the Day-spring of Bat'ha (Mecca) to Yathrib (Medina), He (Mohammed) turned toward Jerusalem at the time of prayer, until the Jews spake some unseemly words which are not fit to be mentioned in this place and will lead to prolongation. To be brief, Mohammed greatly distressed, was gazing toward the sky with the eye of reflection and perplexity. Then Gabriel descended and chanted the following verse: "We have seen thee turn thy face toward heaven, but we will cause thee to turn thyself toward a Kiblah which will please thee" (K. S. 2). Another day he was engaged in the mid-day prayer with a number of his followers. They had performed the first two rak'ats (prostrations), when Gabriel descended and said: "Turn therefore thy face toward the Sacred Mosque (at Mecca)" (K. S. 2). During the prayer, His Holiness, turning away from Jerusalem, faced Ca'aba. Instantly such an agitation and excitement arose among the companions that a number of them discontinued the prayer and left Him.

This test was only for the trial of the servants; otherwise that Ideal King need not have changed the Kiblah but would have appointed Jerusalem even

¹ The direction toward which the face must be turned when praying.

in that age, without stripping it of this robe of acceptance. For the command of the Kiblah was not changed at the time of most of the Prophets appointed after Moses, such as David, Jesus and other great Prophets who came in the interval between them. All these Messengers, on the part of the Lord of the creatures, commanded people to turn toward that direction. Moreover all lands bear the same relation to that Ideal King, except that land which He selects for some especial thing at the appearance of His Manifestations. As it is said: "Unto God belongeth the east and the west, therefore whithersoever you turn yourselves to pray, there is the Face of God" (K. S. 2). Notwithstanding the verity of these facts, why was it changed, causing complaint and lamentation among the servants and excitement and agitation among the companions? Yea, such things which cause dread to people, only happen that all may be tested by the touchstone of God and that the truthful may be separated and distinguished from the untruthful. Therefore after the dissension of the people, He said: "We appointed the Kiblah toward which thou didst formerly pray, only that We might know him who followeth the Messenger from him who turneth on his heel" (K. S. 2). The purport of this verse is that He changed and abolished the Kiblah which was Jerusalem, to see who would follow Him and who would turn upon his heel, that is, would disobey, reject and discontinue the prayer and

run away "like timorous asses fleeing from a lion" (K. S. 74).

Were ye to reflect a little, ye would find doors of significances and explanations opened in this subject and statement, and behold all the knowledge and the mysteries thereof without veils. These things are only for the purpose of training and delivering the souls from the cage of self and desire, for that Ideal King in Himself hath forever been independent of the knowing of the beings, and in His Identity will ever be exalted above the adoration of contingent things. A single breeze of His Affluence honors all the world with the robes of wealth, and a mere drop of the sea of His Generosity favors all the existence with Eternal Life. But as the purpose is to distinguish between truth and falsehood, sun and shadow, therefore at every instant tests sent from the presence of the Lord of Might pour down like copious rain. Were people to ponder a little over the former Prophets and their manifestation, the matter would become so easy to them that they will not be veiled by reason of deeds and words which are contrary to their egotism and desire. They will burn every veil with the fire of the Sadrat of Knowledge and rest upon the throne of quiescence and composure. For example, Moses the Son of Amran, one of the great Prophets and the possessor of a Book, one day in the earlier part of His Dispensation, before His Mission, was passing through the market. Two men were striving

with each other, one of whom begged help from Moses. His Holiness assisting him, killed his opponent, as recorded in the Book. To speak of this in detail would delay and defer our subject. This report was published throughout the city and fear fell upon His Holiness, according to the text of the Book. Finally He received the message: "O Moses, verily, the magistrates are deliberating concerning thee, to put thee to death" (K. S. 28); whereupon He left the city and remained in the service of Shoeb (Jeth-ro) in Midian. Upon His return He arrived at the "Blessed Valley"—the wilderness of Sinai—where He witnessed the manifested Light of the King of Unity from the Tree "which is neither of the east nor of the west" (Koran). He heard the soul-cheering Spiritual Voice from the enkindled Fire of Divinity and was appointed to guide the Pharaohic souls; to deliver the people from the valley of ego-tism and desire and lead them to the heart-rejoicing plains of spirit and guidance; to conduct all in the creation from the perplexity of remoteness to the abode of the Peace of Nearness, through the Salsabile of Severance. When He entered the house of Pharaoh and delivered that for which He was appointed, Pharaoh loosed his tongue in abuse, saying: "Art thou not he who committed murder and became an infidel?" This was spoken by the Lord of Glory as having been said by Pharaoh to Moses: "Yet hast thou done thy deed which thou hast done and thou art a faithless

person. He said: I did it indeed and I was one of those who erred: wherefore I fled from you because I feared you: but my Lord hath bestowed command upon me and hath appointed me one of His Messengers " (K. S. 26).

Reflect upon the tests of God and upon the wonders of His trials; how He chose from among His servants and appointed to the greatest guidance a man known to be a murderer and who himself confessed his injustice, as recorded in the verse; a man evidently brought up for thirty years or less in the house of Pharaoh and supported by his food and nourishment! This notwithstanding that Mighty King (God) had the power to prevent Moses from committing murder, so that he should not be known by this name among the servants, causing dismay in hearts and avoidance by people.

Likewise consider the case of Mary—how that excellent countenance longed for death in her perplexity, because of the importance of the matter. For it is shown in the blessed verse that after the birth of Jesus, Mary lamented with these words upon her lips: " Would that I had died before this and had become a thing forgotten and lost in oblivion " (K. S. 19). I swear by God that hearts are melted and souls quiver when hearing these words. This agitation and grief was caused by the reproach of enemies and the censure of the people of unbelief and insolence. Now reflect; what answer could Mary give to

the people? How could it be explained to them that a child whose father was unknown, was of the Holy Ghost? So this chaste one of eternity took her child and returned to her house. When the eye of the multitude fell upon her, they said: "O sister of Aaron, your father was not a bad man and your mother was not unchaste" (K. S. 19).

Consider this mighty test and most great trial. Notwithstanding all this, God conferred Prophethood upon that Essence of Spirit (Jesus) who was known among people as fatherless, and appointed Him His proof to all in the heavens and earth.

Behold how the King of Creation causes the affairs of the Manifestations to appear contrary to the wish and desire of the servants. When thou art acquainted with these essences of mysteries thou wilt be informed of the purpose of that Beloved One and discover the words and deeds of that powerful King to be alike; so that whatever is manifest in His deeds is evident in His words, and whatever is seen in His words shows forth in His deeds. Consequently these deeds and words are outwardly a punishment for the evil-doers, while inwardly a mercy for the just. To one who perceives with the eye of the heart, the words revealed from the Heaven of Will are as one with the actions proceeding from the Kingdom of Power; and are understood to be the same. This hath already been mentioned.

Now, O my brother, if such things should happen

or such events take place in this age, consider what the people would do! I swear by the Educator of Existence and the Revealer of Words that they will at once declare (those concerned) infidels and condemn to death. Should a hundred thousand cries be raised, it would not enter a single ear that a fatherless one had been appointed to Prophethood or a murderer had given utterance to "verily I am God," from the Tree of Fire. Where would they listen to one who announced that a Jesus had appeared through the breath of the Holy Spirit or that a Moses had been appointed by the Irresistible Command?

If the eye of Justice be opened, it will be seen from all these explanations that similar happenings and their consequences are evident in this day. Although such conditions have not appeared during this Manifestation, yet people clinging to the imaginations of rejected souls have made charges and inflicted calamities the like of which hath never appeared in the world of creation.

God is Great! When explanation reached this point, spiritual fragrance wafted from the Dawn of Sublimity and the breeze of morning blew from the City of the Sheba of Eternity. Its breath conferred fresh glad tidings upon the soul and an immeasurable expansion upon the spirit! It spread a new carpet and brought precious and innumerable gifts from that Traceless Beloved for whose lovely stature the robe of mention is short and for whose shining figure the

mantle of explanation is inadequate. It unfolds the allegory of meanings without word and reveals the mysteries of explanation without tongue. It teaches lamentation and mourning to the nightingales of the foliage of separation and absence; instructs them in the rule and ceremony of love and loving, and in the mystery of heart-surrender. It imparts the mode of ravishment and charm to the wonderful flowers of the Rizwan of Nearness and Union, confers the mysteries of truths upon the anemones of the garden of love and deposits its minute allegories and their subtleties in the breasts of the lovers. It hath shown such favor at this hour that the Holy Spirit envies greatly. It hath given to a drop the waves of a sea and endowed a mote with the splendor of a sun. Bounties have reached such a measure that the beetle seeks to attain the musk-sac and the bat hath chosen residence in the face of sunshine. It hath raised the dead from the graves of the body through the breath of life; seated the ignorant in the high station of knowledge and established the unjust upon the summit of justice.

The world of existence is impregnated with all these favors, awaiting the time when the trace of this invisible Providence shall appear in the earth, lead the exhausted athirst to the clear Kawther of the Beloved and enable wanderers in the wilderness of remoteness and death to reach the Tent of Nearness and Life of the Beloved. Who will sow these seeds of holiness in the ground of the heart? And in the

garden of whose soul will the anemones of Invisible Realities bloom? In a word; the Sadrat of Love in the Sinai of Love is too intensely enkindled to be quenched and exhausted by waters of explanation. Seas fail to allay the thirst of this fish, and this bird of fire can only abide in the fire of the face of the Beloved. Therefore O brother, light the lamp of Spirit with the oil of Wisdom in the recess of the heart and protect it by the glass of Knowledge, that the breath of polytheistic souls may not extinguish it nor prevent its shining.

Thus have We illumined the Horizon of the Heaven of Utterance with the lights of the Suns of Knowledge and Wisdom, so thy heart may thereby be tranquillized and thou mayst become of those who soar upon the wings of assurance in the sky of the love of their Lord the Merciful!

As to the words—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven"—He says that after the eclipse of the Sun of Divine Knowledge and the falling of the stars of the established ordinances,—after the darkening of the Moon of Knowledge—which is the Educator of the servants,—and disappearance of the landmarks of guidance and prosperity,—after the morn of faithfulness and peace is obscured, then shall the sign of the Son of Man appear in heaven. By "heaven" is meant the phenomenal heaven. For preceding the appearance of that firmament of the Heavens of Justice and the

floating of the Ark of Guidance upon the Sea of Grandeur, a star becomes visible in the sky, which announces the manifestation of that "Most Great Orb" to the people of the heavens. Likewise a star appears in the Heaven of Significance, which announces that "Most upright and precious Dawn" to the people of the earth. These two signs have appeared in both the outward heaven and inward heaven preceding the Manifestation of every Prophet, as hath been heard. One was the "Friend of the Merciful" (Abraham). Before the appearance of His Holiness, Nimrod had a dream and summoned the soothsayers. They warned him of the rise of a star in the sky. Likewise a man appeared in the earth who announced the Manifestation of His Holiness Abraham the Prophet.

After Him, was the story of the "Interlocutor of God" (Moses). The soothsayers of that period warned Pharaoh that a star had risen in the sky, indicating the birth of a child in whose hand was his destiny and that of his people. Also a wise man appeared, who in the evenings consoled and assured the children of Israel, announcing good tidings to them, as recorded in the books. If the details of these matters be mentioned, this treatise would become a volume. Moreover We do not wish to cite stories of past occurrences. God testifies that even this explanation is only through great love for your Honor, so that perchance a multitude of the needy ones of

earth may arrive at the haven of wealth, a number of ignorant ones may reach the sea of Knowledge, and the athirst for enlightenment may attain to the Sal-sabile of Wisdom. Otherwise this servant deems engaging in these subjects a great iniquity and accounts it a weighty transgression.

When the Manifestation of Jesus drew nigh, some of the Magi who were aware of the appearance of the star of Jesus in Heaven, followed the trace thereof until they entered the city which was the imperial residence of Herod,—for in those days the rule of those countries was under his control,—saying: “Where is he who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.” After making enquiries, they learned that the child was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This was the sign in the outward heaven.

As to the sign in the inward heaven, that is in the Heaven of Knowledge and Significances;—this was the appearance of John the son of Zachariah, who announced the Manifestation of His Holiness (Jesus) to the people; as it is said: “Verily God announceth to thee, John, who shall acknowledge the Word which cometh from God; an honorable person and one of the righteous” (K. S. 3). By the “Word” is meant His Holiness Jesus, the announcer of whose Manifestation was John. It is also recorded in heavenly tablets: “Johanna was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying ‘repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven

is at hand.' ” (Matt.) By Johanna is meant John.

Likewise before the appearance of the beauty of Mohammed, the signs in the outward heaven became manifest and the inward signs were four men who successively announced to the people the Manifestation of that Divine Sun upon earth. Rouz-bih sur-named Salman was favored with the honor of serving them. When the time of death came to one, he sent Rouz-bih to the other, until the turn of the fourth arrived. He, at the time of death said: “ O Rouz-bih, after enshrouding and burying me, go thou to Hijaz where the Mohammedic Sun will rise. To thee be glad tidings of the meeting of His Holiness! ”

As to this wonderful and impregnable Cause, most of the astronomers announced the appearance of the star in the phenomenal heaven. Likewise the two brilliant lights—Ahmad and Kazim (may God sanctify their dust)—appeared in the earth.

Consequently it is shown by these expressions that before the coming of each one of the Mirrors of Unity, the signs of that Manifestation appear in the outward heaven as well as in the inward Heaven which is the station of the Sun of Knowledge, the Moon of Wisdom and the Stars of Significances and Utterance. It is the appearance of a perfect man before every Manifestation to train and prepare the servants for the meeting of that Sun of Divinity and Moon of Unity.

As to His words: “ And then shall all the tribes

of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory " (Matt. 24-30)—The purport of this saying is that at that time the people will lament because of the absence of the Sun of Divine Beauty, the Moon of Knowledge and the Stars of Intuitive Wisdom; then it will be witnessed that the Face of the Promised One and the Beauty of the Adored One will descend from heaven riding upon a cloud; that is that Divine Beauty will appear from the Heavens of the Supreme Will, in the human temple. The purpose of "heaven" is none other than to denote the exaltation and loftiness which is the station of the appearance of those Day-springs of Holiness and Dawning-places of Pre-existence. Although these Ancient Beings outwardly appear from the wombs of mothers, yet in reality they descend from the Heavens of Command; and although they dwell upon the earth, yet they recline upon the couch of Significances; and while walking among the servants, they soar in the skies of Nearness. They journey in the land of Spirit without the motion of foot and fly upward to the summit of Oneness without wing. In every breath they traverse the world of creation east and west, and in every moment pass through the kingdom of the Seen and Unseen. They are established upon the throne of "no employment keepeth Him from doing many things (at the same time)," and they are seated upon the chair of "every day (is) He employed in (some

new) work " (K. S. 55). They are sent forth from the loftiness of the power of the King of Pre-existence and from the exaltation of the Will of the Most Great Ruler. Therefore He says He shall " descend from heaven."

The word " heaven " is used in many senses in the utterances of the Suns of Significances; such as the " heaven of Command," the " heaven of Will," the " heaven of Desire," the " heaven of Knowledge," the " heaven of Assurance," the " heaven of Explanation," the " heaven of Epiphany," the " heaven of Concealment," etc. In every instance He intends for the word " heaven " a meaning which can only be comprehended by those who have knowledge of the mysteries of Oneness and have quaffed from the chalices of Eternity. For example, it is said " Your sustenance is in the heaven, and also that which ye are promised " (K. S. 51), although sustenance grows up from the earth. Likewise, " the names come down from heaven," although they proceed from the tongue of the servants. Shouldst thou make the mirror of heart pure and clear from the dust of prejudice, thou wilt comprehend all the symbols in the sayings of the perfect Word of Divinity in every Manifestation and be informed of the mysteries of Knowledge. But unless thou destroyest with the fire of Severance the veils of learning which are conventional among the servants, thou wilt not attain to the brilliant morn of the Ideal Knowledge.

Knowledge is divided into two kinds:—Divine Knowledge and Satanic knowledge. One appears from the inspirations of the Ideal King; the other emanates from the imaginations of darkened souls. The teacher of one is the Exalted God and the teacher of the other is sensual suggestion. The explanation of one is “fear God and God will teach you,” and the definition of the other is “knowledge is the greatest veil.” The fruits of one tree are patience, longing, wisdom and love, and the fruits of the other are pride, vain-glory and conceit. No scent of these obscure learnings, the darkness of which hath encompassed all regions, is inhaled from what the Masters of Utterance have explained concerning the meaning of Knowledge. The only fruit of this tree is injustice and iniquity, and it yields no crop but malice and hatred. Its fruit is deadly poison and its shadow is a destructive fire. How excellent is the saying, “cling to the hems of passion, cast off modesty, abandon the pathway of the devotees though they may be illustrious.”

Consequently the breast must be purified from all that hath been heard and the heart sanctified from all attachments, so that it may become a recipient of the invisible inspiration and a treasury of the mysteries of Supreme Knowledges. Therefore it is said—“The traveller in the White Path and in the Red Support shall never reach his homestead unless he is empty-handed from all that is possessed by the people.” This

is the condition of the traveller; duly reflect and meditate, that thou mayest be informed of the purpose of the Book, without veil. To resume: We are kept afar from the subject, yet all mention is concerning the subject; and We swear by God that notwithstanding Our desire to abridge and be brief, We find that the reins of the pen slip from the hand. Yet how countless are the pearls still unpierced in the shell of heart and how many are the houris of significances concealed in the chambers of Wisdom, which no one hath ever touched!—" which neither man nor genii has defiled " (K. S. 55). Notwithstanding all these explanations, it seems as if not one letter of the purpose hath been mentioned and no sign of the object hath been explained. When will an intimate one be found to don the garb of pilgrimage to the sacred precinct of the Friend and attain to the Caaba of the Desired one? to hear and discover the mysteries of explanation without ear or tongue?

The meaning of "heaven" in the revealed verse is known and understood through these clear, sound and evident explanations. As to the saying that He will descend in a cloud:—By "cloud" is meant things contrary to the egotism and desire of men, as mentioned in the formerly quoted verse—"Ye therefore, whenever a Messenger cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, proudly reject him and accuse some of imposture and slay others" (K. S. 2). Such (clouds), for instance, are the changing

of ordinances, substitution of laws, removal of customary rules and ceremonies, and pre-eminence of those who become believers among the common people over the learned who deny. Likewise is the appearance of that Eternal Beauty according to human limitations, such as eating, drinking, poverty, riches, glory, abasement, sleeping, waking and similar things which cause people to doubt and which hinder them. All such veils are interpreted as "clouds."

These are the clouds whereby the heavens of the knowledge and wisdom of all in the earth are rent and cloven, as it is said: "On that Day the heaven shall be cloven asunder by the clouds" (K. S. 25).

As clouds prevent the eyes of men from viewing the phenomenal sun, so the above conditions hinder the people from apprehending that Ideal Sun. It is mentioned in the Book and attributed to the tongue of the unbelievers thus—"And they say what kind of a messenger is this? he eateth food and walketh in the streets (as we do) ; unless an angel be sent down to him and become a (fellow-) preacher with him" (K. S. 25). As those Temples of Holiness were subject to outward indigence and adversity and also to natural and bodily necessities, such as hunger, diseases and incidental happenings, the people would become bewildered in saharas of doubt and suspicion and in deserts of imagination and perplexity, (wondering) how could one come from God, claim predomiance over all in the earth and ascribe to Himself

the motive of the creation of beings—as He hath said,—“¹ Were it not for thee, I would not have created the firmaments,”—and yet be afflicted by such trifling matters. For it is heard how every Prophet and his companions suffered adversities such as indigence, diseases and contempt; how the heads of their followers were sent as presents in the cities; how they were prevented from that whereunto they were commanded, and each of them suffered by the hand of the enemies of religion, to such an extent that the latter inflicted upon them whatever they desired.

It is evident that the changes and alterations effected during every Manifestation are the dark cloud which prevents the eye of the servants' knowledge from knowing that Divine Sun which shines forth from the Day-spring of Deity. When the servants who have continued for years to imitate the religion of their ancestors and who have been brought up in its established ceremonies and customs, suddenly find one who hath been among them, their equal in all the human limitations, abolishing those religious ordinances in which they have been trained for successive centuries and the contradictor and denier of which they consider as infidel, impious and profligate,—such circumstances naturally constitute a veil and cloud for those whose hearts have not tasted the Sal-sabile of Severance nor drunk from the Kawther of Knowledge. As soon as they hear these things, they

¹ Tradition, citing the words of God to Mohammed.

become so veiled from the comprehension of that Sun, that they declare Him as infidel and condemn Him to death, without appeal. This hath been witnessed since the earliest centuries and is also seen in this time. Therefore an effort should be made that through the Invisible Assistance we may not be prevented by similar dark veils and the cloud of Divine tests from beholding that shining Beauty; that we may know Him in Himself, and if we seek any proof, we may be satisfied with one evidence and argument, in order that we may attain to the fountain of the Infinite Bounty before which all bounties are accounted as nothing; and not to oppose Him every day by an imagination nor by clinging to a fancy.

Praise be to God! Although these things have been formerly announced with wonderful symbols and references, so that all the people might know and not be deprived of the Ocean of Oceans of Bounties in this day, yet the matter hath happened as witnessed.

Similar texts are also revealed in the Koran saying—"Do (the infidels) expect less than that God should come down to them overshadowed with clouds, and the angels also" (K. S. 2)? Some of the outwardly learned have considered this verse to be a sign of an imaginary resurrection day which they have understood, although the same statement is recorded in most of the Heavenly Books and is spoken of in all passages in connection with the signs of the subsequent Manifestation, as formerly mentioned.

Likewise it is said—"The day (whereon) the heaven shall produce a visible smoke which shall cover mankind; this will be a tormenting punishment" (K. S. 44). The Lord of Might hath made all these conditions which are contrary to impure souls and opposed to the desire of people, as a test and standard by which He tries His servants and distinguishes the righteous from the wicked, the believer from the denier; as already stated. In this verse He hath interpreted the supersedure, abolition and removal of customary ceremonies and the destruction of established standards to mean the "smoke." Is there any smoke greater than this which hath enshrouded the people and is such a torment to them that do what they will they are not able to remove it but suffer a new punishment every moment, from the fire of self? When they hear that this wonderful and Divine Cause and this irrefutable and eternal Command hath appeared throughout the earth and is advancing every day, a new fire is enkindled in their hearts; and whenever they witness the power, devotion and firmness of the followers who are day by day becoming more stanch and steadfast through the Providence of God, a new trouble arises in their souls.

Praise be to God, that in these days the dominion of God hath so prevailed that they dare not speak, and if they meet with one of the followers of God who freely and voluntarily sacrifices a hundred thousand lives in the path of the Beloved, they profess

faith through fear, but in private, engage in cursing and execration; as it is said—"And when they meet you, they say, 'We believe'; but when they assemble privately together, they bite their finger tips because of their wrath against you. Say (unto them), die in your wrath; verily God knoweth the innermost part of your breasts" (K. S. 3).

Before long thou shalt find the standards of Divine power hoisted in all regions and see the signs of His sovereignty and dominion manifested in all lands.

To resume: as most of the divines have not comprehended these verses and are not informed of the purport of "resurrection," they unwittingly interpret them to denote the imaginary resurrection. The One God testifies that with a little perception they may understand all the subjects intended, through the interpretation of these two verses, and attain to the brilliant morn of assurance through the Providence of the Merciful.

Thus doth the Dove of Eternity sing unto thee upon the twigs of the Sadrat of EL-BAHA that perchance thou mayest walk in the pathway of Knowledge and Wisdom, through the permission of God.

As to His saying: "And will send His angels, etc.": These "angels" are souls who through spiritual power have burned human qualities by the fire of Divine Love and become characterized with the attributes of the Exalted Ones and Cherubim. His Holiness Sadik (the sixth Imam) hath said concerning

Cherubim: “They are a multitude of our Shi’ite followers, behind the Throne.” Although by the words “behind the Throne” many meanings are intended, both outwardly and inwardly, yet in one sense it indicates that no true Shi’ite exists. For he hath said in another place, “A true believer is likened unto the philosopher’s stone;” then he asked the listener, “Have you ever seen the philosopher’s stone?” See how this symbolical statement, which is more eloquent than a clear explanation, indicates that a true believer doth not exist. This is the saying of Sadik. Consider how many are the unjust people who have not inhaled the fragrance of faith, yet they attribute unbelief to those through whose sayings faith is verified.

To resume; as these holy beings are sanctified and purified from human inclinations, have become endowed with the attributes of the Spiritual Ones and qualified with the characteristics of the Holy Ones, the name “angel” is applied to them. In brief, this is the meaning of these words, every particular of which hath been explained in clear evidences, sound proofs and manifest arguments.

As the people of Jesus did not attain to these meanings and these signs did not outwardly come to pass as they and their divines understood, they have not believed in the Holy Manifestations from that day until the present; therefore they have been deprived of all the sacred bounties and veiled from the won-

derful Words of eternity. This is the condition of these servants in this Day of Resurrection. They have not even understood that if in any age the signs of a Manifestation were to appear in the phenomenal world in conformity with that which is recorded in the traditions, no one would dare deny or oppose them nor could the pious and the unjust, the sinner and the righteous, be distinguished. Be just; for instance, if these statements recorded in the Gospel be literally fulfilled, and angels descend with Jesus the Son of Mary from the phenomenal heaven in a cloud, who would dare to deny and who would be able to reject or dispute? Nay rather, such agitation would suddenly seize upon the people of earth that they would be unable to speak a word, much less to deny or accept.

It was owing to the non-comprehension of these meanings that a number of the Christian clergy disputed with His Holiness (Mohammed), saying, "If thou art that promised Prophet, why are not those angels with thee which are recorded in our Book and which were to come with the promised Beauty, to assist Him in His Cause and threaten the servants?" Thus the Lord of Might hath recorded their statement—"Why then should not angels descend to him and threaten with him" (K. S. 25)? The purport of this is, "why hath no angel been sent down with Mohammed to warn and threaten people?"

Such contradictions and oppositions have been

among the people in every age and cycle. They have ever been occupied with vain sayings, that a certain sign hath not appeared and another hath not come to pass. Such diseases affected them only because of adherence to the divines of the age in their approval or denial of these pure Essences and Divine Temples. The divines being submerged in selfish conditions and engaged in paltry and evanescent affairs, found these Immortal Suns contrary to their learning and understanding and opposed to their judgment and decision. They also interpreted and explained the meanings of the Divine words and the traditions and records of the "Letters of Unity" literally, according to their own understanding. So they bereft and deprived both themselves and the people from the shower of Divine Grace and Mercy. Yet they acknowledge the well-known tradition which says—"Our Word is arduous and intricate." It is also said in another place, "Verily our matter is arduous and intricate; no one can bear it except an angel of Nearness, a Prophet sent¹ or a servant whose heart God hath tested for faith." They know to a certainty that none of these three is true concerning them. As to the first two, this is clear; as to the third, they have never been proof against the tests of God, and at the appearance of the Divine Touchstone they showed forth nothing but alloy.

Praise be to God! Notwithstanding their ac-

¹ A Prophet to whom a Book is revealed.

knowledgment of this tradition, these divines who are still in uncertainty and doubt regarding religious questions, nevertheless claim knowledge of the abstruse questions of Divine principles and the essential mysteries of the Words of Holiness. They assert that such and such a tradition which is one of the signs of the appearance of Gha'im (Mahdi), is not yet fulfilled, while they have not apprehended a scent of the meanings of traditions; unconscious that all the signs have appeared, that the "bridge of the Command" is extended and that the faithful are crossing it with the swiftness of lightning; while they are still expecting the appearance of the signs. Say, O Concourse of the ignorant, await ye, even as those before ye are awaiting!

Were one to question them concerning the fact that among the signs of the manifestation of subsequent Prophets recorded in the verses of former Books, some relate to the appearance and rise of the Moham-medic Sun already mentioned; and as none of these signs hath literally come to pass, therefore by what proof and argument do they reject the Christians and similar nations, and declare them as infidels?—finding themselves unable to answer, they cling to this, that these Books have been interpolated and that they are not and have not been from God; although the words of the verse testify to its being from God. The tenor of this same verse is also in the Koran; were ye of those who know! Truly I say,—during

this time they have not understood what is meant by interpolation.

Yea, in the revealed verses and in the utterances of the Ahmadic Mirrors (Imams), there is mention made of "alteration by the self-exalting ones" and "interpolation by the proud ones;" but these are spoken of in connection with special instances. Among them is the story of Ibn-Souria (a Jewish Rabbi). When the people of Khaibar questioned the Point of the Koran (Mohammed) concerning the sentence against adultery committed between a married man and a married woman, His Holiness said that the sentence of God is stoning. They contradicted Him, saying "there is no such command in the Pentateuch." His Holiness said: "Among your Rabbis, whom do you consider an authority and whose words do you acknowledge?" They agreed upon Ibn-Souria. His Holiness summoned him and said: "I adjure thee by God who cleft the sea for you, sent down manna for you, overshadowed you by the cloud, delivered you from Pharaoh and his people and exalted you above men—to tell us that which Moses hath ordained concerning the sentence against adultery between a married man and a married woman." He replied, "O Mohammed, it is stoning." His Holiness said, "Why then is this sentence abolished and not enforced among the Jews?" He replied, "When Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem and put the Jews to death, only a small number survived. The divines of that

age, considering the small number of the Jews and the multitude of the Amalekites, assembled in consultation and concluded that should they act according to the decree of the Pentateuch, even those who had escaped from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar would be destroyed by the verdict of the Book. For this reason they entirely set aside the death penalty."

Meanwhile Gabriel descended to His enlightened heart and submitted this verse, "They have transposed words from one place to another" (K. S. 4).

This is one of the instances. In this place, by "transposition" is not meant what these worthless creatures have understood, for some say that the Jewish and Christian divines have effaced from the Book the verses referring to the Mohammedic Countenance and have inserted others which are contrary to them. This is extremely insignificant and unreal. Can a man who believes in a Book, knowing it to be from God, mutilate it? Moreover the Bible was in existence over all the earth and not confined to Mecca and Medina, that it could be changed or altered. Nay rather, by "transposition" is intended that in which the divines of the Koran are engaged to-day, that is, interpreting and explaining the Book according to their inclination and desire. As the Jews in the Day of His Holiness (Mohammed) interpreted the verses of the Pentateuch which pointed to His Manifestation according to their own desire and were not satisfied with His explanation, therefore the decree of transposition

emanated concerning them. It is likewise seen in this day that the adherents of the Koran have transposed the verses of the Book concerning the signs of the Manifestation and interpret them in conformity with their own wish and inclination.

In another place it is said: " Yet a part of them heard the word of God and then perverted it after understanding it, while they knew " (K. S. 2). This verse also indicates transposition of the meanings of the Divine words and not the effacement of the words themselves, as is evidenced by the verse quoted and as understood by right minds.

In another place it is said: " And woe unto those who transcribe (corruptly) the Book with their (own) hands and then say ' this is from God; ' that they may sell it for a small price " (K. S. 2).

This verse was revealed respecting the Jewish men of learning and prominence because those divines, to please the rich and receive worldly emoluments from them, also to display their rancor and unbelief, wrote many documents refuting His Holiness, wherein they presented arguments the mention of which is not allowable here; asserting that these arguments were founded upon the books of the Penta-teuch.

In similar manner it is seen in this day how much the ignorant divines of the age have written in refutation of this wonderful Cause, imagining that these calumnies are in conformity with the verses of the

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Book and in harmony with the words of the Possessors of Understanding.

To resume: The purpose of these explanations is that if they say these signs mentioned in the Gospel were transposed and thus reject them, clinging to verses and traditions, be ye informed that this is downright falsehood and sheer calumny.

Yea; transposition according to the sense already mentioned is alluded to in specific places. We have spoken of some of them that it may be known and demonstrated to every discerning man that even the outward learnings are possessed by some of the illiterate ones of God, and in order that contradictors may not oppose nor have in mind that a certain verse indicates transposition but that We have refrained from mentioning these points and subjects through lack of information. Furthermore most of the verses which indicate transposition have been revealed respecting the Jews, were ye to roam in the islands of the Knowledge of the Koran.

It is also heard from some of the ignorant ones of the earth that the Heavenly Gospel is not in the hands of the Christians, but hath ascended to heaven—heedless that by this statement they impute the utmost injustice and tyranny to God the Exalted (Lofty and Glorified is He!). If after the Sun of the Beauty of Jesus disappeared from among the people and ascended to the fourth heaven, the Book of God (Exalted is His Praise!)—which is His greatest evidence

to His creatures—should also disappear, to what would the people adhere from the time of Jesus until the rise of the Mohammedic Sun? And to what Command should they submit? Moreover how could they be the object of the vengeance of the Real Avenger and how could the punishment and scourges of the Ideal King fall upon them? Furthermore this would necessitate the cessation of the bounty of the Bountiful One and closing of the door of mercy of the King of Creation. We seek refuge in God from what the servants imagine concerning Him! Exalted is He above what they know!

O revered one! In this eternal morning wherein the lights of "God is the Light of the heavens and earth" (K. S. 24) have encompassed all the world, and the tent of the preservation and protection of "God willeth no other than Himself to perfect His Light" (K. S. 9) is erected, and the Hand of Power of "in His Hand is the Kingdom of all things" is outstretched and raised,—loins of endeavor should be firmly girded that we may perchance enter the Holy City of "Verily we are of God," through the favor and beneficence of God, and abide in the exalted stations of "and to Him we do return."

Please God, thou shouldst purify the eye of heart from the beckonings of water and clay, that thou mayest comprehend the infinite degrees of Knowledge and realize that God is too manifest for thee to cling to any evidence or need any proof to demonstrate His Being.

O questioning lover! If thou dost soar in the holy atmosphere of Spirit, thou wilt see the True One so manifest above all things that thou wilt find naught else save Him. "There was God and nothing with Him." This condition is sanctified above demonstration by any proof or being shown by any argument. If thou dost traverse the sacred space of Truth, (thou wilt behold) all things renowned through His Distinction, while He hath been and will be known in Himself. If thou art abiding in the ground of argument, then be satisfied with that which is said by Himself: "Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down unto thee the Book" (K. S. 29)? This is the evidence which He hath Himself established; greater proof than this there is none nor ever will be. "His verses are His proof and His Being is His argument."

At this time, We beseech the people of the Beyan, its wise men, sages, learned and witnesses, not to forget the Commandments of God as mentioned in the Book and to look always toward the Origin of the matter, lest at the time of the Manifestation of that Essence of Essences, Truth of Truths and Light of Lights, they may cling to some of the verses of the Book and inflict upon Him that which was inflicted in the cycle of the Koran. For that King of Divinity hath power to take life from the whole Beyan and its people, by a single letter of His Own wonderful Words; or bestow upon them all a wonderful pre-existent Life by a single letter, and resuscitate and

send them forth from the graves of egotism and desire. Be attentive and watchful, for all must end in belief in Him and in attaining His Days and Meeting. " Righteousness is not turning your faces toward the east and the west; but righteous is he who believes in God and in the Last Day " (K. S. 2). Hear ye, O people of the Beyan, that which We exhort ye in Truth, that perchance ye may dwell in the shadow extended in the Days of God!

CHAPTER II

THE following chapter explains that verily the Sun of Truth and the Manifestation of the Self of God is indeed King over all in the heavens and earth, even if none of the people of the earth obey Him; and He is independent of all in the creation though He may not possess a single coin. Thus We show unto thee the mysteries of the matter and reveal unto thee from the essences of Knowledge so that thou mayest soar upon the wings of severance in that atmosphere which is hidden from the eyes.

The substance and essence of this chapter is to demonstrate and explain to the possessors of pure souls and to sanctified mirrors that in whatever age and cycle the Suns of Truth and Mirrors of Oneness appear to the visible world from Divine Tents of the Invisible, they manifest themselves with mighty power and triumphant dominion for the development of the contingent beings and for the outpouring of bounty upon existent things. For these preserved Jewels and hidden and unseen Treasuries are the Sources for the appearance of "God doeth whatever He willeth and God ordereth whatever He desireth."

It is evident to the possessors of Knowledge and

illuminated minds that the Unseen Divinity and Essence of Oneness hath been holy beyond emanation and appearance, ascent and descent, ingress and egress; is exalted above the praise of every praiser and the comprehension of every comprehender. He hath been and is everlastingly hidden in His Own Essence and will be eternally concealed from eyes and sights in His Own Identity. "The sight comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth the sight; He is the Gracious, the Wise" (K. S. 6).

No relation, connection, separation, union, nearness, remoteness, position or reference is possible between Him and the contingent things, inasmuch as all in the heavens and earth have become existent by the word of His Command and have stepped forth from utter and absolute non-existence and nothingness into the court of the existent and visible, through His Desire which is the Will Itself.

Glory be to God! Nay, even there hath not been nor will be any connection or relation between the contingent things and His word. "God warneth you to beware of Himself" (K. S. 3) is a clear proof of this fact, and "there was God and nothing whatever was with Him" is obvious evidence thereof. Therefore all the Prophets, successors, divines, sages and wise men confess their lack of attainment to the knowledge of that Essence of Essences and admit their inability to know and reach that Truth of Truths. As the doors of knowing the Essence of Eternity were closed before

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the face of all the contingent things, therefore He caused brilliant Essences of Sanctity to appear from the holy worlds of the Spirit, in mighty human temples, among the creatures, in accordance with the abundant mercy of "His mercy hath encompassed all things," and "My mercy hath extended to all things;" in order that they may express that Eternal, Essence and Pre-existent Entity. These Mirrors of Sanctity and Dawning-places of Divinity fully express that Sun of Existence and Essence of Desire. For instance, their Knowledge expresses His Knowledge, their Power His Power, their Dominion His Dominion, their Beauty His Beauty, and their Manifestation His Manifestation. They are the treasuries of Supreme Knowledges, stores of Eternal Wisdom, revealers of Infinite Bounty, Dawning-places of that Sun of Eternity. Therefore it is said: "There is no difference between Thee and them, except that they are Thy servants and Thy creatures." This is the station of "I am He and He is me," recorded in the tradition.

Traditions and records indicating this fact are many, but for the sake of brevity this servant doth not undertake to mention them. Nay rather, all that is in the heavens and earth show forth the Divine Names and Attributes until the traces of the splendor of that Sun of Truth are manifest and evident in every atom; so that without the appearance of this splendor, nothing can be honored with the robe of life nor attain to existence in the phenomenal world. What suns of

knowledges are concealed in an atom! What oceans of wisdom are hidden in a drop! Among the beings, Man is especially assigned to these robes and chosen for this dignity; for all the Divine Names and Attributes are manifest and evident in human appearances, in the most perfect and excellent manner. All of these Names and Attributes have reference to Man. Therefore He hath said: "Man is My mystery and I am his Mystery." Successive verses proving and indicating this fine and subtle point are recorded and mentioned in all the Heavenly Books and Divine Writings; as it is said: "We will surely show them Our signs in the regions (of the earth) and within themselves" (K. S. 41). Likewise it is said: "And also in your own selves, will you not therefore consider" (K. S. 59)? In another place it is said: "And be not as those who have forgotten God and whom He hath caused to forget their own selves" (K. S. 59). Likewise the King of Eternity (may the life of all in the tent of the Invisible (lit. Amaa) be a sacrifice to Him!) hath said: "Whosoever hath known himself hath surely known his Lord."

O thou my friend; I swear by God that if thou dost ponder over these statements thou wilt find doors of Divine Wisdom and portals of Infinite Knowledge opened before thy face.

To resume: It hath become evident through these explanations that all things express the Divine Names and Attributes. Each in proportion to its capacity,

indicates and points to the Divine Knowledge, until the appearances of (His) Attributes and Names have encompassed all the seen and the unseen. Thus it is said: "Is there any appearance in aught else save Thee, which is not of Thee,—that it could have brought Thee forth? Blind is the eye which doth not behold Thee!" It is also said by the King of Eternity: "I have seen no thing except I beheld God in it, before it or after it." Also in the tradition¹ of Comeil—"The Light which shone forth from the Morn of Eternity, the traces of which gleam upon the Temples of Unity." Man, the most noble and perfect of the creatures, is a mightier evidence and greater expression than the other visible things. The most perfect, superior and excellent of men are the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth; nay rather, all else save them exist only through their desire and move by their generosity. "Were it not for Thee (Mohammed), I would not have created the firmaments." Nay, all are mere nothingness and absolute non-existence before their court of holiness; their mention is purified from mention of others, and their description is sanctified above description of all else. These Holy Temples are the Eternal Primal Mirrors which express the Invisible of the Invisibles and all His Names and Attributes, such as Knowledge, Power, Dominion, Grandeur, Mercy, Wisdom, Glory, Generosity and

¹ A prayer written by Ali. The quotation which follows is one of His answers to the question "What is Truth?"

Beneficence. All these Attributes become manifest and evident through the appearance of these Essences of Oneness and these qualities are not peculiar to some to the exclusion of the others. Nay, all the favored Prophets and holy Chosen Ones are qualified with these Attributes and named by these Names, but in certain stations some appear mightier in manifestation and greater in light; as it is said: "These are the Prophets; We have preferred some of them before others" (K. S. 2). Therefore it is shown and confirmed that the Prophets and Chosen Ones of God are Day-springs of the manifestation and emanation of all these exalted Attributes and Infinite Names, although some of these Attributes may or may not outwardly appear in those luminous Temples. Even if a certain quality is not outwardly manifested from those abstracted Spirits, it cannot be denied that those repositories of Divine Attributes and mines of Supreme Names possess that quality. Therefore all these brilliant Beings and wonderful Countenances are declared to be endowed with all the Attributes of God, such as Dominion, Grandeur and the like, though they may not apparently appear with outward dominion and other similar (powers). This point is evident and certain to every possessor of perception and in no need of argument.

Yea, as these servants have not obtained the interpretations of the holy words from the clear and brilliant fountains of Divine Knowledges, they are wan-

dering thirsty and withered in the valley of doubts and heedlessness, having turned away from the sea of fresh salutary water, and are roving around the bitter salt. As the Nightingale of Divinity hath said concerning them: "Although they see the way of righteousness, yet they shall not take that way. But if they see the way of error, they shall take that way because they accuse our signs of falsity and neglect the same" (K. S. 7). The translation of this is that if they see the way of rectitude and salvation, they do not take that way nor do they advance toward it; but if they see the path of error, disobedience and untruth, they will adopt it as the road for attainment to the True One. This advancement toward untruth and turning away from the True One did not occur—that is, they were not afflicted with this error and misguidance—except as retribution for denying Our signs and ignoring the revelation and appearances of Our verses.

It is likewise witnessed that in this wonderful and exalted Manifestation, myriads of Divine verses are revealed from the Heaven of Power and Mercy, yet the people have denied and cling to the words of servants who do not comprehend a single letter thereof. For this reason they have doubted similar clear facts, depriving themselves of the Rizwan of Knowledge of the One God and the Garden of Eternal Wisdom.

To be brief; we will return to the subject questioned, namely: "Although the dominion of the

Gha'im is recorded in the traditions related of the 'Brilliant Stars' (Imams), yet no trace of sovereignty hath appeared. Nay rather, the contrary is realized, inasmuch as His followers and friends have been and are afflicted and confined in the hands of the people and are of the utmost lowliness and impotence in the world."

Yea, the sovereignty which is mentioned in the Books in connection with the Gha'im is true and beyond doubt, but it is not a dominion or government which can be comprehended by every individual. Moreover all the former Prophets who have announced to the people a subsequent Manifestation have also spoken of the dominion of that Manifestation, as is recorded in the former Books. This is not confined to the Gha'im alone. Dominion and all the Names and Attributes are certain and evident concerning all those preceding and subsequent Manifestations, for they are the appearances of the Invisible Attributes and Dawning-places of Divine Mysteries, as already mentioned.

Furthermore, by sovereignty is meant the prevalence and power of His Holiness over all the contingent things, whether it appears in the material world with an outward predominance or not. This depends upon His Own Will and Desire. But it is evident to your Honor that the purpose of sovereignty, wealth, life, death, revival and resurrection as recorded in the former Books, is not that which these people conceive

and apprehend in this day; nay rather, by dominion is intended the dominion which appears during the days of the manifestation of each one of the Suns of Truth by Himself in Himself. It is that inward authority by which they prevail over all in the heavens and earth, and which afterward appears in the phenomenal world according to the capacity of the world, time and creatures. For instance, the sovereignty of His Holiness the Messenger (Mohammed) is now evident and manifest among people, whereas in the beginning, His Cause was as you have heard. How the people of unbelief and error—the divines of that age and their followers—afflicted that essence of Intuition and quintessence of Character! What thorns and refuse were strewn in the pathway of His Holiness! It is evident that according to their wicked and satanic imaginations, those persons considered injury to that Temple of Eternity conducive to their salvation. For all the learned of the age, such as Abdallah Obei, Abu-Amer the hermit, Ka'ab-Ibn-Ashraf and Nazr'Ibn-Harith falsely denied Him and accused Him of madness and calumny; such accusations that God forbids the ink to flow, the pen to move, or the page to speak in their mention. Yea, these accusations caused people to oppress His Holiness. It is evident and clear what will befall one whom the divines of the age reject, repudiate and consider faithless. It hath been seen what hath befallen this servant.

Therefore His Holiness said: "No prophet has been persecuted as I have been persecuted." The accusations they made and the injuries they inflicted upon His Holiness are all mentioned in the Korān; refer thereto that thou mayest be informed of the occurrences. Finally it became so difficult for His Holiness that for some time none held intercourse with Him and His companions, and the utmost injury was inflicted upon whomsoever went into His presence.

In this connection We mention one verse. If thou dost open the eye of discernment, thou wilt mourn and lament all thy life over the oppression of His Holiness. This verse was revealed at a time when His Holiness was greatly dejected and depressed by the violence of calamities and opposition. Gabriel descended from the Sadrat-El-Muntaha of Nearness and chanted this verse: "If their aversion (to thy admonitions) be grievous unto thee—if thou canst, seek out a cave (whereby thou mayest penetrate) in (the inmost part of) the earth, or a ladder (by which thou mayest ascend) into heaven" (K. S. 6). The import of this utterance is that there is no remedy and they will not withhold their hands from thee unless thou dost hide thyself underground or flee to heaven.

Consider in this day how many rulers bow down before the name of His Holiness and how many countries and the inhabitants thereof abide under His shadow, glorying in their relationship to Him and mentioning that blessed name with profound rever-

ence and respect from pulpits and minarets! Even those kings who have not entered His shadow and have not cast away the garment of unbelief, confess and acknowledge the greatness and majesty of that Sun of Providence. This is the outward kingdom which thou seest. This sovereignty will necessarily appear and be established for all the Prophets either during their lives or after their ascension to the Ideal Abode, as is witnessed in the present day. But that Dominion which is intended, is forever and ever revolving around them, is always with them and not separated from them for a moment. It is that Inner Dominion which hath encompassed all in the heavens and earth.

The following is one instance of that Dominion which appeared from that Sun of Oneness. Hast thou not heard how through one verse He distinguished between light and darkness, the righteous and the wicked, the faithful and the infidel? By the revelation of the same verse, all the signs and indications of the Day of Judgment of which thou hast heard, such as resurrection, revival, opening of the Book, and others became manifest. This revealed verse was also a mercy to the righteous; that is, to those who, hearing, said: "O our Lord, we heard and we obeyed." Likewise it became a punishment to the wicked; that is, to those who, hearing, said: "We heard and we disobeyed." It was as the sword of God to separate the faithful from the infidel; father from son. Thou hast

seen how those who acknowledged and those who rejected sought after each other's lives and property! How many fathers turned away from sons and how many lovers shunned their beloved! This wonderful sword was so keen and trenchant that it cut asunder every relationship. On the other hand, it united them; for it hath been witnessed that a multitude of people, among whom the Satan of self had for years sown seeds of rancor and hostility, became so united and harmonious through faith in this wonderful and impregnable Cause that it seemed as if they had sprung from the same loins. Thus God unites the hearts of those who are sincerely devoted to Him, believe in His signs, and are of those who drink from the Kawther of Grace through the Hands of Might. Moreover, how many people of different beliefs, creeds and customs have been clothed with the new garment of Oneness through this breeze of the Rizwan of Divinity and Spring-garden of Ideal Sanctity, and have drunk the cup of Singleness!

This is the meaning of the well-known tradition, "The wolf and the ewe will feed and drink in the same place." Consider the lack of knowledge of these ignorant ones, like the former nations, still awaiting the time when these creatures will meet at the same table. This is the condition of people! It seems they have never drunk from the cup of Justice nor stepped into the path of Equity. Furthermore, what benefit would the fulfilment of this matter produce in the

world? Excellent is that which hath been revealed concerning them: " They have hearts by which they understand not and they have eyes by which they see not " (K. S. 7).

Consider how the account of the people was settled by this one verse revealed from the Heaven of Will; for whosoever acknowledged and advanced, his good deeds outweighed his evil deeds and all his transgressions were forgiven and overlooked. Therefore it is true of Him that " He is swift in bringing to account." Thus God transforms evil deeds into good deeds, were ye of those who look steadily into horizons of Knowledge and into souls of Wisdom. Likewise whosoever partook of the cup of Love attained eternal, immortal, and faith-founded life from the ocean of everlasting Bounties and from the cloud of perpetual Mercy; while whosoever did not accept was afflicted with everlasting death. By " life " and " death " recorded in the Books, is meant life through faith and death through unbelief. It is owing to lack of comprehension of this meaning, that in every Manifestation the generality of people refused to believe, were not directed to the Sun of Guidance, and did not follow the Eternal Beauty.

When the Mohammedic Lamp was lighted in the Ahmadic recess, He adjudged the people as to resurrection, revival, life and death. Therefore standards of opposition were raised and doors of derision were opened; just as the faithful Spirit (Holy Ghost)

hath recorded from the tongue of the infidels: "If thou say, Ye are surely raised after being dead; the unbelievers will say, This is nothing but manifest sorcery" (K. S. 11). Also, "If thou dost wonder (at the infidels denying the resurrection), surely astonishing is their saying, 'After ("Iza," lit. "if" or "when") we have been dust, are we a new creation"' (K. S. 13)? The translation of this is: If thou dost wonder, etc., how astonishing are the words of the infidels and deniers who say: "We were dust?"—and then, by way of derision: "Are we the resurrected ones?"

Therefore, in another place, rebuking them, He says: "Is our power exhausted by the first creation? Yea; they are in perplexity because of a new creation" (K. S. 50). The import of this is: Are we powerless and exhausted by our first creation? Nay, these infidels are in doubt and perplexity because of a new creation.

As the commentators and people of literal interpretation did not comprehend the meaning of the Divine words and were veiled from the intrinsic purport, they sought to demonstrate through grammatical rules, asserting that when "iza" (lit. "if" or "when") precedes the past tense, it conveys a future meaning. Afterward they were confused by texts in which the word "iza" is not revealed; as it is said: "And the trumpet is sounded; this is the day which hath been promised; every one hath come and with him a driver

and a witness " (K. S. 50). The outward meaning of this is: It is sounded in the trumpet and this is the promised day which seemed very remote; every one hath come for account and with him is a driver¹ and a witness.² In similar instances they have either taken the word " iza " as implied or sought to prove that as the resurrection day is of sure occurrence, it hath therefore been rendered (in this verse) in the past tense, as if it had already taken place. Consider how ignorant and undiscerning they are! They do not comprehend the Mohammedic trumpet-sound of which He so clearly spoke and have deprived themselves of the benefit of this Divine Voice; awaiting the trumpet-sound of Israfil who is but one of His servants; although the existence of Israfil and others like unto him became known through the utterance of His Holiness. Say, do ye exchange Him who is good unto you? Then ye did evil in that ye changed this falsely. Therefore evil is your exchanging without truth and ye are an evil people who are in loss.

Nay rather; by " trumpet " is meant the Mohammedic trumpet which was blown to all the contingent beings; and " resurrection " was the rise of His Holiness in the Command of God. All the heedless who were dead in the graves of bodies, He clothed with the new mantle of faith and quickened through a new and wonderful life. Therefore when that Beauty of

¹ " Driver," one who calls attention to the Truth.

² " Witness," one who gives evidences of the Truth.

Oneness desired to reveal a sign of the mysteries of resurrection, revival, paradise and fire, Gabriel brought the revelation of this verse: "And they will wag their heads at thee, saying When (shall) this (be)? Answer, peradventure it is nigh" (K. S. 17). That is, before long, these wanderers in the valley of error shall wag their heads in derision and say: When shall these things appear? Say thou in answer—Peradventure they are nigh. The import of this single verse is sufficient for the people, were they to consider it with acute vision.

Praise be to God! How far from the paths of Truth were these people! Although the "resurrection" was realized in the rise of His Holiness, and the lights and tokens thereof had pervaded the whole earth, yet they derided and held to views based upon the false and vain imaginations of the divines of the age, heedless of the sun of Supreme Providence and the showers of Divine Mercy. Yea; the beetle is deprived of the holy fragrances of eternity and the bat flees from the splendor of the world-illuminating sun. The same fact is witnessed in every age during the appearance of the Manifestations of the True One; as Jesus said: "Ye must be born again." In another place He hath said: "Except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6).

The interpretation of this is, whosoever is not quick-

ened by the water of Divine Knowledge and by the Holy Spirit of Jesus is not fitted to enter the Supreme Kingdom; for whatsoever proceeds from and is born of flesh is flesh, and whatsoever is born of the Spirit, that is the breath of Jesus, the same is Spirit. The essence of the meaning is that those servants who are born of and quickened by the Spirit and breath of the appearances of holiness in every Manifestation, to them can be attributed life, resurrection, and entrance into the Paradise of Divine Love; while to others is ascribed death, heedlessness, and entrance into the fire of unbelief and Divine wrath. In all the books, tablets and scriptures, death, fire, lack of sight, hearing, and understanding is attributed to those who have not drunk of the pure cups of Knowledge and whose hearts have not attained to the bounty of the Holy Spirit of the time; as it hath been previously mentioned: "They have hearts by which they understand not," etc.

In another place in the Gospel it is said: One day, the father of one of the disciples of Jesus died. He spoke of it to His Holiness, begging permission to go perform the burial and return. That Essence of Severance said: "Let the dead bury their dead." Similarly two people of Cufa went to His Holiness the Commander (of the Faithful—Ali). One owned a house and wished to sell it; the other was the purchaser. They had decided that this transaction should take place and its agreement be written under the advice of His Holiness. That exponent of the Divine

Command ordered the scribe to write: "A dead man hath bought from a dead man, a house bounded by four limits; one extending toward the grave, one toward the tomb, one toward the sirat (bridge), and one either toward paradise or toward hell."

If these two souls had been quickened by Ali's trumpet of life and raised from the grave of heedlessness through love of His Holiness, "death" would certainly not have been applied to them. In no age and cycle hath the purpose of the Prophets and Holy Ones been other than the real life, real resurrection and real revival. By reflection upon this statement of His Holiness, what hath been intended by "grave," "tomb," "sirat," "paradise" and "hell" will be disclosed, but alas, all the people are veiled within the tomb of self and buried in the grave of passion. To resume; were ye to taste a little of the clear water of Divine Knowledge, ye would know that the real life is the life of heart and not the life of body; for both animals and men share in the life of body. But this Life is assigned to possessors of brilliant souls who drink from the ocean of faith and partake of the fruit of assurance. This Life is not followed by death nor this immortality by mortality; as it is said: "A true believer is alive both in this world and the world to come." If by "Life" be meant the outward life of body, it is evident that death overtakes it. There are likewise other statements recorded in all the books, which indicate this exalted fact and lofty word. Also

the blessed verse revealed concerning Hamza “¹Lord of the Martyrs,” and “²Abu-Jahl,” is a clear evidence and manifest proof—as it is said: “Or, he who hath been dead and whom we have restored unto life and unto whom we have ordained a light whereby he may walk among men, (be) as he whose similitude is in darkness and who is not out of it” (K. S. 6) ?

This verse was revealed from the Heaven of Will at the time Hamza was clad in the holy robe of faith and Abu-Jahl was rooted and fixed in unbelief and denial. So “life after death” was applied to Hamza from the source of Mighty Divinity and the abode of the Most Great Supremacy; but the contrary was applied to Abu-Jahl. For this reason the fire of unbelief flamed in the hearts of the infidels and the winds of contradiction arose. They cried out: “When did Hamza die; when was he quickened and when was this life imparted to him?” As they did not comprehend these blessed explanations nor appeal to the people of Ziker³ in order that these might confer a sprinkling of the Kawther of Significances upon them, therefore such corruptions raged throughout the world.

In like manner thou seest in the present day that

¹ Title of the uncle of Mohammed.

² “Father of Folly”: A title given by Mohammed to Abul-Hakam (Father of Wisdoms) who was one of the prominent men of Koraish and did not believe in Mohammed.

³ Those who have the custody of the words of a Prophet; for instance, the saints of Christ.

notwithstanding the Sun of Significances, all the people both high and low are clinging to the dark beetles and satanic appearances, continually asking them intricate questions, while they, from lack of Knowledge, answer in a way that will not impair their outward possessions. It is evident a beetle itself hath acquired no portion from the breeze of the musk of eternity nor stepped into the Rizwan of ideal myrtles, therefore how can it convey the odor of perfume to other nostrils. This hath been and will forever be the condition of these servants. Only those who advance toward God and turn away from the appearances of the Satan will attain to the traces of God. Thus God hath ordained the decree of the Day by the Pen of Grandeur upon a Tablet concealed behind the Veil of Might. Shouldst thou heed these explanations and reflect upon their outward and inward (meanings), thou wilt comprehend all the intricate questions which in this day have become a bar between the servants and the knowledge of the Day of Judgment. Then thou wilt not need to question. We hope, if it please God, thou wilt not return from the shore of the Divine Ocean deprived and thirsty, and from the sanctuary of Eternal Desire destitute. Now what will your effort and exertion accomplish?

To resume: The purpose of these clear explanations is to prove the Dominion of that King of Kings. Now be just as to which is mightier and greater; this Dominion which through one word hath so much

power, prevalence and grandeur, or the dominion of kings who, after protecting their subjects and the poor, are for a number of days outwardly obeyed by the people who in heart reject and oppose?

This dominion hath conquered, quickened and imparted life to the world by a single word. "How can the dust (be compared) with the Lord of Lords?" How can comparison be ascribed when every relation is debarred from the holy court of His Dominion? Were one to consider fully, even the servants of His threshold rule over all the creatures and beings, as it hath been and will be evident.

To be brief; this is one of the meanings of the Inward Dominion explained according to the ability and capacity of the people. There are other Dominions for that Point of Existence and that praiseworthy Countenance, of which degree this Oppressed One is not able to speak, nor are the creatures capable of comprehending it. God is glorified above description of His Dominion by the servants and exalted above their mention!

We ask your Honor a question! If the purpose of dominion be outward rule and temporal sway and power whereby the people are subdued and to which they outwardly bow and submit—so that the friends are tranquillized and honored and the enemies debased and degraded—how can such form of dominion be true concerning the Lord of Might, in whose name is unquestionably the sovereignty and whose majesty

and grandeur are acknowledged by all? For thou dost witness how most of the earth is in possession of His enemies and all are working against His good-pleasure, disbelieving, rejecting, and turning away from that which He hath commanded and inclining toward and practising that which He hath forbidden; while His friends are always suffering in the hands of enemies. All this is clearer than the sunlight. Then know, O thou questioning seeker, that outward dominion hath never been nor will be esteemed of importance by God and His Holy Ones. Moreover, if the purpose of dominion and power be outward dominion and power, then the matter would become difficult to your Honor. For it is said: "And that our armies should surely be the conquerors" (K. S. 37). In another place it is said: "They seek to extinguish the Light of God with their mouths; but God willeth no other than to perfect His Light, although the infidels be averse thereto" (K. S. 9). Also, "He is the Conqueror above all things." Most of the Koran clearly indicates this point.

If the purpose be what these worthless creatures say, there will be no alternative for them except to deny all these holy words and eternal references; for in this world there hath been no loftier host nearer to God than Hosein, the Son of Ali; nor had His Holiness any peer upon earth. "Were it not He, no one like Him would be in the world." Notwithstanding this thou hast already heard that which happened.

“ Shall not the curse of God fall upon the unjust ”
(K. S. 11) ?

If thou dost interpret this verse (“ our armies should surely be the conquerors ”) literally, it would never be outwardly true concerning the Holy Ones of God and His Hosts, for His Holiness (Hosein), whose “ Host ”-ship was as clear and evident as the sun, quaffed the cup of martyrdom in the land of Taff (Karbila) with the utmost oppression and subjection. Likewise the blessed verse, “ They seek to extinguish the light of God with their mouths; but God willeth no other than to perfect His Light, although the infidels be averse thereto.” If this be interpreted according to the outward sense, it will never reconcile, for the Divine Lights have always been outwardly extinguished and the Eternal Lamps quenched; how then shall the victory be realized? And what is the meaning of the prohibition in the blessed verse, “ God willeth no other than to perfect His Light ”? It is evident that these Lights found not rest in a place of safety nor drank the cup of tranquillity, owing to the hand of the infidels. These Lights were so oppressed that every one inflicted upon these Essences of Being whatever he wished—all of which is understood and apprehended by the people. In view of all this, how can these people undertake to interpret and explain these Divine words and verses of Eternal Might?

To be brief; the purpose is not as they have understood; nay rather, by dominion, power and authority

is meant another state and matter. For instance, consider the dominion of the blood of His Holiness (Hosein) which was sprinkled upon the earth; how by the blessedness and power of that blood,^r the dust exercised victory and influence over the bodies and souls of men; so that whosoever for the sake of recovery tasted a particle thereof, was healed, and whosoever for the preservation of property, treasured some of that sacred dust in his house with perfect faith and confirmed knowledge, protected all his possessions. This is the measure of its outward effects. Should We mention the inner virtues, people would undoubtedly say that We have considered "The dust as the Lord of Lords," and have utterly forsaken the religion of God.

Likewise consider that although His Holiness suffered martyrdom with the utmost abjection, and there was no one apparently to aid Him, to give Him ablution or enshroud Him, yet at the present time how many people from different parts and regions leave their countries to present themselves in that land and lay their heads upon that threshold. This is the Divine Power and Dominion; the Supreme Majesty and Grandeur.

Thou shouldst not imagine that inasmuch as these things have happened after His martyrdom, they impart no result to His Holiness; for His Holiness is forever alive with the Divine Life and abides upon the

¹ Mohammedan belief in the efficacy of the dust of the Imams Tombs.

inaccessible couch of Nearness and upon the exalted tree of Union. These Essences of Being are ready to expend all; that is, they sacrifice life, property, soul and self in the path of the Friend, and to them no station is more beloved than this. The lovers have no wish except the good-pleasure of the Beloved and seek no aim except the meeting of the Desired One.

Should We wish to explain a sprinkling of the mysteries of martyrdom and the fruits thereof, these Tablets undoubtedly would not suffice nor could they bring it to an end. We hope, if it please God, a breeze of mercy may blow and the tree of existence be clothed with a new robe through the Divine Spring, that we may apprehend the mysteries of the Divine Wisdom and through His providence become independent of the knowledge of all things. No one hath yet appeared who hath attained to this station except a few who are not renowned. The future will be what the Divine judgment demands and what appears from within the Tent of Decree. Thus We explain unto thee the wonders of the Cause of God and reveal unto thee the melodies of Paradise that thou mayest peradventure attain to the sources of Knowledge and partake of the fruits of Wisdom. Consequently it should be known to a certainty that although these Suns of Grandeur dwell upon the earth, yet they abide upon the Most Great Throne; although they may not possess a single coin, yet they soar upon the summit of Wealth; and while afflicted in the hands of the enemy, they are

seated upon the right hand of Power and Dominion. They are established and rest upon the Throne of Eternal Might, although outwardly in the utmost humiliation; and occupy the seat of Sovereignty and authority while apparently in the extremity of weakness.

Thus one day Jesus the Son of Mary, seated Himself upon a chair and made explanations through the melodies of the Holy Spirit, the import of which is this: "O people! My food is from the herbs of the earth, by which I satisfy my hunger. My bed is the bare ground; during the night my lamp is the light of the moon and I have no steed but my feet. Who upon earth is richer than I?" I swear by God that a hundred thousand wealths revolve around this poverty and a hundred thousand Kingdoms of glory seek after this lowliness. Shouldst thou attain to a sprinkling of the ocean of these significances thou wilt abandon the world of phenomena and existence and sacrifice thy life around the shining lamp, as doth the "bird of fire."

A similar instance is related of His Holiness Sadik. On a certain day, one of His followers complained of poverty, before His Holiness. That Eternal Beauty said: "Thou art rich and hast drunk from the wine of wealth." The indigent one, astonished at the words of that brilliant countenance, said, "How am I rich while I am in need of a single coin?" His Holiness replied, "Hast thou not love for us?" He said, "Yes, O Thou son of the Messenger of God!"

“ Wilt thou sell it for one thousand dinars of gold ? ” enquired Sadik. He answered, “ I would not give it for the world and all therein ! ” His Holiness said, “ How can one be poor who possesses something which he will not exchange for the world ? ”

The poverty and wealth, lowliness and honor, dominion, power, and such things considered as important by these worthless creatures, have no mention in that Court; as it is said: “ O men, ye have need of God, but God is Self-sufficient ” (K. S. 35). Consequently by “ wealth ” is intended independence of all else save God and by “ poverty ” the need of God.

Another day, Jesus the Son of Mary was surrounded by the Jews. They wished His Holiness to acknowledge having made the claim to Messiahship and Prophethood, in order that they might declare Him infidel and sentence Him to death. Finally they led that Sun of the Heaven of Significances into the presence of Pilate¹ and Caiaphas, the greatest of the doctors of that age. All the divines were present at that meeting and a large multitude assembled for the purpose of beholding, deriding and annoying Him. No matter how much they enquired that perchance they might hear Him acknowledge, His Holiness held His peace nor did He choose to answer. At length a wretch arose and came opposite His Holiness, saying: “ I adjure thee, didst thou not say, ‘ I am the Messiah of God, I am the King of Kings, I am the possessor of

¹ Although in nationality a Roman, Pilate in religion was a Jew.

a Book and I am the destroyer of the Sabbath day'? " His Holiness, lifting up His blessed head, said: " Dost thou not see that verily the Son of Man is seated upon the right hand of power and might? " This He said, although no accessories of power were outwardly found with Him, but an inward Power which pervaded all in the heavens and earth. No need to relate what they inflicted upon Him and how they dealt with Him after this saying. Finally they so designed to persecute and destroy Him that He took His flight to the fourth Heaven.

It is also recorded in the Gospel of Luke that another day His Holiness passed by one of the Jews who was afflicted with palsy and laid upon a couch. When he saw His Holiness, he recognized Him by His appearance and began to entreat. His Holiness said, " Arise from thy bed; verily thy sins are forgiven." Several Jews who were present at that place began to murmur, saying, " Who can forgive sins but God alone? " Then Christ perceived their thoughts and said: " Whether is easier to say arise, take up thy bed, or to say thy sins be forgiven thee? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins," etc., etc. (Luke v. 23). This is the real Sovereignty and Power of the Holy Ones of God. By all these statements repeatedly cited from different places and instances it is intended that ye may be informed of the interpretations of the words of the Chosen Ones of God that perchance the foot may not

slip and the heart may not be troubled by certain statements.

Thus we may enter into the path of Certain Knowledge, with the step of assurance, that perchance the breeze of Good-Pleasure may blow forth from the Rizwan of the Divine Acceptance and enable these mortal ones to reach the Everlasting Kingdom. Then thou wilt understand the meanings of sovereignty and the like, spoken of in traditions and verses. It is already evident and known to your Honor that exactly the same thing to which the Jews and Christians clung in contradicting the Mohammedic Beauty, is in this day held by the people of the Koran in denying the "Point of the Beyan" (may the lives of all in the Kingdom of Command be a sacrifice to Him!). Behold these senseless men who to-day speak the word of the Jews and are not conscious thereof! How excellent is His revelation concerning them—"Leave them to amuse themselves with their vain discourse" (K. S. 6). And, "As thou livest they wander in their folly" (K. S. 15).

When the Eternal Unseen and the Essence of Divinity caused the Mohammedic Sun to shine forth from the horizon of Knowledge and Significances, one of the objections of the Jewish doctors was that after Moses no Prophet should arise. Yea, it is recorded in the Book that a Face should appear to promulgate His (Moses) religion and creed until the Law written in the Pentateuch should encompass all the earth. There-

fore the King of Unity relates of these exhausted ones in the valley of remoteness and error—"The Jews say, the hand of God is tied up. Their (own) hands shall be tied up and they became cursed for that which they have said. Nay, His Hands are both stretched forth" (K. S. 5). The translation of this is—The Jews said the hands of God are tied up. May their own hands be tied up! Cursed they became for their false accusation. Nay, the hands of the Divine power are always outstretched and protecting. "The Hand of God is above their hands" (K. S. 48).

Various accounts have been given by commentators concerning the revelation of this verse (K. S. 5). Yet consider the import thereof, for He says it is not as the Jews have imagined, that the Ideal King created the Mosaic Countenance, conferred upon Him the robe of Prophethood, then His Hands were bound and He is not able to send any Messenger after Moses. Consider how remote from the path of Knowledge and Wisdom is their senseless saying! In this day, these people (Mohammedans) are occupied with similar vain sayings. For over a thousand years they have been reciting this verse, and unwittingly censuring the Jews; not perceiving and understanding that publicly and privately they themselves are saying the same thing the Jews assert. For thou hast heard them declare that all the Manifestations are ended, the doors of Divine mercy are closed, no Sun shall dawn again from the Ideal Day-springs of Holiness, no waves ap-

pear from the eternal Ocean of Pre-existence and no Temple come forth from the Divine Tents of the Invisible. This is the comprehension of these worthless creatures! They have conceded the cessation of the universal Bounty and abundant Mercy, which no intellect or understanding will allow. From every side and direction they gird up the loins of oppression and exert themselves to extinguish the fire of the Sadrat with the salt water of superstition, heedless that the bowl of Power preserves the lamp of Unity within the stronghold of its protection. It is sufficient degradation for this multitude that they are deprived of the Original Purpose and veiled from the substance and essence of the Command; for the utmost Divine bounty ordained for the servants is the "Meeting of God" and His Knowledge, which are promised to all. This is the extreme bounty of the Pre-existent Bountiful One for His servants, and the fulness of absolute grace for His creatures. But none of these servants hath partaken thereof or attained this supreme honor. Although there are many revealed verses which clearly indicate this great point and mighty fact, yet they have denied it and interpreted the verses according to their own desire. It is said " (As for) those who believe not in the signs of God and His Meeting, they shall despair of My Mercy, and for them (is) a painful punishment (prepared)" (K. S. 29). Likewise it is said " Those who (seriously) think they shall meet their Lord, and that to Him they shall return " (K. S. 2).

In another place, " But they who considered that they should meet God said, How often hath a small army discomfited a great army! " In another place, " Let him, therefore, who hopeth to meet his Lord, work a righteous work " (K. S. 18). Again, " He ordereth all things; He showeth (His) Signs distinctly, that ye may be assured ye must meet your Lord " (K. S. 13).

They have denied all these verses indicating the " Meeting," which is the strongest decree found in the Heavenly Books, and have deprived themselves of this lofty and exalted position and this excellent and glorious rank. Some say that by this is meant the meeting of the splendor of God in the Day of Resurrection. If they assert that the " Universal Splendor " is intended, this exists in all things, for we have formerly demonstrated that all things show forth the splendor of that Ideal King, and that the traces of the effulgence of the sun of the Manifestor exist and are visible in the mirrors of beings. Nay, if the spiritual and Divine eye of man be opened, he will see that nothing exists without the appearance of the splendor of that Ideal King. For thou dost perceive that all contingent and created things express the manifestation and emanation of that Ideal Light, and dost behold the doors of the Divine Rizwan opened in all things for seekers to enter the cities of Intelligence and Wisdom, and attained ones to pass into the gardens of Knowledge and Power. In

every garden the bride of significances is seen seated in the chambers of words, with full adornment and grace. Most of the Koran verses indicate and show forth this spiritual fact. The saying, "Neither is there anything which doth not celebrate His praise" (K. S. 17), is eloquent testimony thereto; and "everything have we computed and written down" (K. S. 78) is a faithful witness thereof. If by "Meeting of God" is meant the meeting of these splendors, then all the people have attained to the meeting of the Eternal Countenance of that Peerless King. Why, then, is it assigned to the Day of Resurrection?

But if they say the purpose is the "Special Splendor," the state interpreted by some of the Sufis as the "Most Holy Outpouring;" if it is in the Essence Itself, it hath been eternally in the Divine Knowledge. Supposing this hypothesis to be admitted; in this sense "Meeting" cannot become true of any one, because this state is realized in the Innermost of the Essence, unto which none can ever attain! "The way is barred, and seeking after it is forbidden." The minds of the Near Ones cannot soar to this station, how much less can the intellects of the limited and veiled ones! If they say it is the "Secondary Splendor," which is interpreted as the "Holy Outpouring," this is unquestionably in the world of creation, that is, in the world of primal manifestation and original emanation. This station is assigned only to His Prophets and Holy

Ones, because no greater and mightier than they have appeared in the realm of existence; and all confess and acknowledge this fact. These are the sources and manifestors of all the eternal Attributes and Divine Names, and these are the Mirrors which fully express. All that refers to them is in reality referred to His Highness, the "Manifest and Invisible One." Knowledge of the Origin and attainment thereto can only be achieved by knowing and attaining to these Beings who shine forth from the Sun of Truth. Consequently, by meeting these Holy Lights, the "Meeting of God" is attained; through their Knowledge the Knowledge of God, and by their Faces the Face of God. From the fact that these abstracted Essences are the first, the last, the manifest, and the hidden, it is proved of that Sun of Truth, that He is verily "the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden" (K. S. 57), and likewise the other exalted Names and lofty Attributes. Therefore whosoever is favored by these shining and glorious Lights and hath attained to these luminous and radiant Suns during every Manifestation hath attained the "Meeting of God," and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. This "Meeting" can not be realized by any except in the Resurrection Day, which is the rise of the Self of God in His Universal Manifestation.

This is the meaning of that "resurrection" recorded and stated in all Books, and which Day hath been announced to all. Consider, is there any day to

be imagined greater, mightier and more excellent than this Day, that man should turn away from it and deprive himself of its bounties, which are pouring like the spring cloud from the presence of the Merciful? After it hath been proved with complete evidence that no day is greater than this Day, and no matter is mightier than this matter; and after all these sound and solid proofs which no one who is wise and sagacious can deny or avoid, how can man deprive himself of such great bounty through words of the doubting and visionary? Have they not heard the well-known tradition, "When the Gha'im shall rise, the resurrection shall rise"? The rightly guided Imams—the inextinguishable Lights—have similarly interpreted the verse, "Do (the infidels) expect less than that God shall come down to them, overshadowed with clouds" (K. S. 2)—an event which they unquestionably know shall happen in the resurrection—to mean His Holiness Gha'im and His appearance.

O my brother, understand then the meaning of resurrection and purify thine ears from the sayings of these rejected people. Shouldst thou step a little way into the worlds of Severance, thou wilt testify that no day greater than this Day and no resurrection mightier than this Resurrection can be imagined, and that one deed in this Day is equivalent to deeds performed during a hundred thousand years—nay, I ask pardon of God for this limitation, because deeds done in this Day are sanctified beyond any limited reward. As these

worthless creatures have not understood the meaning of " Resurrection " and the " Meeting of God," they are therefore completely veiled from the bounty thereof. Although the purpose of learning and its anxieties is the attainment and knowledge of this station, yet they are all occupied with outward learnings and desist not from them even for a moment; closing their eyes to the essence of Knowledge and the knowable. It seems as if they have not drunk one drop from the ocean of Divine Knowledge nor attained a sprinkling of the cloud of the Merciful Bounty.

Consider, if one does not partake of the bounty of Meeting or the Knowledge of the Manifestations of God, how can he be truly called learned, although he may have studied a thousand years, and possess all the limited and outward sciences. It is plainly evident that he cannot be said to possess Knowledge. But if one hath not seen a single letter of learning, and hath attained to this mighty honor, he is undoubtedly accounted one of the Divine men of learning, for he hath reached the furthestmost point of Knowledge and its highest degree.

This condition is also one of the signs of the Manifestation; as it is said, " He will make your highest to be the lowest, and your lowest to be the highest." Likewise it is said, " And we were minded to be gracious unto those who were weakened in the land, and to make them models of religion; and to make them

the heirs (of the wealth of Pharaoh and his people) " (K. S. 28). It is witnessed in the present day how many of the divines, by reason of their denial, abide in the lowest planes of ignorance, their names erased from the book of the exalted and the learned; and how many of the ignorant, on account of their belief, have ascended to the highest horizon of knowledge, and their names are registered in the Tablets of Knowledge by the Pen of Power. Thus, " God shall abolish and shall confirm (what He pleaseth), with Him is the original of the Book " (K. S. 13). Therefore, it is said, " Seeking after proof when the fact is attained is blamable, and occupying one's self with learning after reaching the object of knowledge, is to be censured." Say, O people of the earth, this is a fiery Youth who runneth in the wilderness of Spirit, heralding unto you the lamp of God, and reminding you of a Matter which is visible in concealment under the veils of light, from the horizon of Holiness in the region of Irak.

O my friend, if thou soarest a little in the heavens of the significances of the Koran, and walkest upon the earth of Divine Knowledge unfolded therein, many doors of knowledge will be opened before thy face and thou wilt be assured that the very things which in this day prevent these servants from arriving at the shore of the eternal ocean, hindered the people during the Manifestation of the Point of the Koran from acknowledging and submitting to that Sun. Likewise

thou wilt become informed of the mysteries of the "return" and "revival" and dwell in the loftiest chambers of security and assurance.

One day a number of the opponents of that peerless Beauty (Mohammed), who were deprived of the Ca'aba of the Eternal, said to Him by way of derision, "Surely God hath covenanted with us that we should not believe in (any) messenger until (one) should come unto us with a sacrifice which should be consumed by fire" (K. S. 3). The import of this is that the Creator had covenanted with them that they should not believe in a messenger unless he perform the miracle of Abel and Cain, that is, offer a sacrifice, and a fire come from heaven to consume it; as they had heard in the story of Abel, and which is recorded in the books. His Holiness said, in answer, "Messengers have already come unto you before me, with plain proofs and with the (miracle) which ye mention; why, therefore, have ye slain them, if ye speak truth" (K. S. 3)? Now, be just; how could those servants who were in the age and cycle of His Holiness, be actually those in the age of Adam or other Prophets, when the interval between Adam and that time was several thousand years? Why did that Essence of Truthfulness attribute to the servants of His age the murder of Abel or other Prophets? Thou hast no other alternative except to ascribe falsehood and vain saying to His Holiness (which God forbid!), or to say that those wicked ones were the same who contradicted the

Prophets and Messengers in every age, and finally martyred them all.

Ponder carefully over this explanation, that the refreshing breeze of Knowledge may blow from the city of the Merciful and cause the soul to reach the garden of Wisdom through the beautiful utterance of the Beloved One. As the heedless people did not understand the meanings of these perfect and eloquent explanations, and, according to their idea, did not find the answer consistent with the question, therefore they attributed lack of knowledge and hallucination to those essences of Knowledge and Reason.

Likewise, in another verse, it is said in condemnation of the people of the age, "Although they had before prayed for assistance against those who believe not, yet when he came unto them whom they had known (to be from God), they would not believe in him; therefore, the curse of God shall be on the infidels" (K. S. 2). That is, this multitude who waged war and fought against the infidels for the sake of God, and who sought victory in order to assist His Cause, when the one whom they had known came unto them, denied him; therefore the curse of God shall be upon the infidels! Consider how it is understood from this verse that the people of the time of his Holiness were the same people who in the days of each former Prophet strove and fought to promulgate the Law and spread the Cause of God, although the people of the time of Jesus and Moses

were not actually the people of the age of His Holiness. Moreover those whom they had known formerly were Moses the possessor of the Pentateuch, and Jesus the possessor of the Gospel. Notwithstanding this, why did His Holiness say "when came unto them the one whom they had known"—that is, Jesus or Moses—they "denied Him?" As His Holiness was outwardly called by another name, that is, Mohammed,—had appeared from another city and come in another language and law—how then can the verse be proven and understood?

Comprehend thou the subject of "return;" how clearly it is revealed in the Koran; yet no one hath understood until the present day. What wilt thou say? If thou sayest that His Holiness was the return of the former Prophets, as is indicated by the verse, His companions must likewise be the return of the bygone companions, for the return of the former servants is also clearly shown in the mentioned verses. If they deny this, they have contradicted the text of the Book, which is the mightiest proof. Therefore in the same manner understand the fact concerning "return," "resurrection," and "revival" in the days of the appearance of the Divine Manifestations, so that thou mayest behold with the outward eye, the return of the Holy Souls in pure and brilliant bodies; and sanctify and purify the dusts of ignorance and darkened self by the water of mercy from the Knowledge of the Merciful, that peradventure thou mayest distinguish and deter-

mine the highway of the morn of Truth from the night of error, through the shining lamp, Divine power and eternal guidance.

Furthermore, it is evident to your Honor that the Custodians of the Trust of the Unity appear in the temporal worlds with a new Command and a new Cause. As these Birds of the Eternal Throne descend from the Heaven of the Divine Will, and all of them arise in the Supreme, Irresistible Command, therefore they are declared as one person and one essence. For they all drink from the chalice of the Divine love and partake of the fruits of the tree of Oneness. These Manifestations of the True One have two stations. One is the station of pure abstraction and the essence of singleness. In this station, if thou dost name and designate all of them by one name and office, it is not amiss. As it is said, "We make no distinction at all between His Messengers" (K. S. 2). For all of them summon the people to the Divine Unity and announce the Kawther of Infinite Bounty and Grace. All are dignified with the robe of Prophethood and honored by the mantle of glory. Therefore it is said by the "Point of the Koran," "I am all the prophets." Likewise He says "I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses and Jesus." The same statement hath been made by the Ali'ite Countenance. Similar sayings indicating the unity of these Points of Oneness have appeared from the sources of the eternal utterances and treasures of the Knowledge-pearls; as recorded in the Books.

These Countenances are the Points of the Command and the Dawning-places of the Decree. The Command is sanctified from the veils of plurality and contingency of number. Thus it is said, "We have but one Command." Therefore as the Command is one, the Manifestations of the Command are also necessarily one. Likewise the Imams of religion and Lights of Assurance have said, "Our first is Mohammed, our last is Mohammed, and our middle is Mohammed."

To resume: It is evident and certain to your Honor that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Command of God, who have appeared in different garments, and if thou lookest with an attentive eye thou wilt find all of them dwelling in one Rizwan, soaring in one sky, seated upon one carpet, speaking one speech and enjoining one Command. This is the Unity of those Essences of Existence and illimitable and inseparable Suns. Consequently if one of these Holy Manifestations say, "I am the return of all the Prophets," it is true. Likewise in every subsequent Manifestation, the return of the former Manifestation is realized. As the return of Prophets is proven consistent and in conformity with verses and traditions, the return of the holy ones is also certain and accomplished. This return is too clear for need of proof and argument. For instance, consider that among the Prophets was Noah. When He was appointed to Prophethood and arose in the Cause with Divine mission, those who be-

lieved in Him and acknowledged His command were indeed honored with new life, and a new spirit and life became true of them. For previous to believing in God and submitting to the Manifestation of Himself, they had the greatest attachment to temporal effects and properties, such as wife, children, food, drink and the like, to such an extent that they spent night and day in seeking vanities and means of enjoyment, and exerted themselves in procuring transient possessions. Aside from these things, before arriving at the sea of faith, they were so firm and rooted in the limitations of their fathers and forefathers, and in following their ceremonies and laws, that if sentenced to death, they would rather submit than allow the change of a single letter of the habitual customs which prevailed among the multitude. For the people have cried, " Verily, we found our fathers practising a religion and we are guided in their foot-steps " (K. S. 43).

The same people, notwithstanding these limited veils and above-mentioned customs, as soon as they drank the choice wine of Faith from the chalice of Assurance in the hands of the Manifestations of the Praised One, were so transformed that they would abandon wives, children, property, incumbrances, life and belief, yea, all else save God. They were so overcome by excess of longing for God, and by ecstasies of eternal joy, that they would not value the world and all therein as a wisp of straw. Can they not be declared as of " new creation " and " return ? " Like-

wise. it was witnessed that these souls, before attaining to the wonderful and new favor of God, would protect their lives with a hundred thousand plans and schemes from threatenings of destruction, until for instance, they would flee from a fox and avoid a thorn. But after being honored with the Mighty Security and Great Providence, they would voluntarily expend a hundred thousand lives; nay rather, their blessed souls despised the cage of the body, and a single one of these hosts would fight against a multitude. If these souls were the same former souls, how could such things contrary to human tendencies and opposed to bodily desire proceed from them?

To resume: The fact is clear that it is impossible for such deeds and actions which have no similitude to former deeds and actions, to appear and be witnessed in the realm of existence, without a Divine change and transformation; for their agitation was changed to composure, their doubt turned to assurance, and their fear transformed into courage. This is the virtue of the Divine Elixir which transforms the servants in an instant.

For instance, consider the substance copper; which if it is protected in its own mine from superabundance of dryness, will in seventy years¹ attain to the state of gold—although some consider copper itself to be gold, which through superabundance of dryness, hath become disordered and hath not reached its own state.

¹ A statement made by philosophers.

To be brief: a perfect elixir however will cause the substance copper to attain the state of gold in an instant and to traverse the seventy-year stages in a moment. Could it be said that this gold is copper or that it hath not attained the condition of gold, while the test is at hand to differentiate and distinguish the qualities of gold from those of copper?

Likewise these souls have traversed the earth-world in an instant through the Divine Elixir, entered the worlds of sanctity, and in one step reached the Divine Placeless from the limited world of place. An effort is needed that thou mayest attain this Elixir which in an instant causes the west of ignorance to reach the east of Knowledge, makes the gloominess of the dark night attain to the brilliant morning, guides the remote one in the wilderness of doubt to the fountain of nearness and assurance, and directs the mortal temples to the Rizwan of immortality. Now if it be true to declare this gold copper, it will also be true and justifiable to declare these servants to be the same as before they had attained to the Faith.

O brother, through these clear, perfect and complete explanations, the mysteries of "new creation," "revival," and "resurrection" are manifest and evident without veil and covering. If it please God, thou wilt cast off the old garment from body and soul through the unseen confirmations, and be honored with the new and immortal robe.

Therefore in every succeeding Manifestation, those

souls who preceded all in the earth in faith, drank the clear water of Knowledge from the Beauty of Oneness, and ascended to the loftiest summits of faith, assurance and severance can be declared to be the return of the former persons who in name, office, deed, word and condition had attained to these states in the preceding Manifestation. For that which appeared from the former servants, appeared and became manifest in the subsequent ones. If, for example, a garden of roses be in the east of the earth, and that kind of rose also cometh forth from another branch in the west, the name " rose " is applied to it. In this case it is not in respect to the limitations of the branch and its form, but on account of the fragrance and odor which are manifest in both. Consequently sanctify and purify thy gaze from outward limitations, that thou mayest behold them all in one name, one office, one essence, and one truth, and that thou mayest perceive the mysteries of the " return " of the Words in the revealed Words. Reflect a little upon the companions at the time of the Point of the Koran; how they cut themselves from the whole world, were purified, sanctified and severed from all human tendencies and selfish desires through the pure fragrances of His Holiness, and preceded all the people of the earth in attaining the honor of Meeting, which was identical with the Meeting of God. For ye have heard how they sacrificed life before that Manifestation of the Glorious One.

Behold the return of the same firmness, steadfast-

ness and severance in the companions of the Point of the Beyan, for ye have witnessed how these companions have hoisted the banner of Severance upon the summit of Inaccessibility, through the wonders of the generosity of the Lord of Lords.

To be brief: These lights have appeared from one lamp and these fruits have grown from one tree. In reality no difference is perceived and no change is visible. "All this is from the bounty of God; He bestoweth it upon whomsoever of His creatures He wisheth." God willing, we will avoid the land of negation and reach the sea of affirmation, so that we may perceive the worlds of union, division, oneness, separation, limitation and Divine abstraction with an eye sanctified from elements and opposites, and soar upward to the highest horizon of the nearness and sanctity of the significances.

Consequently from these explanations it is evident that should a Face come forth in the "End beyond which there is no end," and rise up in the same Command upheld by a Face in the "Beginning before which there is no beginning," it can be truly said that the last Face is identical with the first, for the Face of the "End beyond which there is no end" hath risen up in the same Command upheld by the Face of the "Beginning before which there is no beginning." Thus the Point of the Beyan (may the life of all save Him be a sacrifice to Him!) hath likened the Suns of Unity to the sun, which though it rise from the "Be-

ginning before which there is no beginning," until the "End beyond which there is no end," is the same sun which hath risen. Now if it be said this sun is that former sun, it is true, and if it be said that it is the return of that sun, it is also true. Likewise from these explanations, the term "last" becomes true of the first Face and conversely; for whatever was upheld by the last Face is identical with that which was upheld by the first Beauty.

Although this point is clear to those who have drunk the choice wine of Knowledge and assurance, yet how many souls through lack of understanding it, are veiled by the term "Seal (last) of the Prophets," and deprived and bereft of the bounties! Although it is said by His Holiness Himself—"I am all the Prophets," and also, "I am Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus," as mentioned, yet they do not consider that while the saying of that Eternal Beauty—"I am the first Adam," is true, likewise His saying—"I am the last Adam," must also be true. For just as He applied the "First of the Prophets"—that is Adam—to Himself, in the same way the "Seal (last) of the Prophets" can also be applied to that Divine Beauty. It is very clear that since the "First of the Prophets" is true of His Holiness, the "Seal (last) of the Prophets" is likewise true.

During this Manifestation, all the people of the earth are tested by this point, and most of them, holding fast to this statement, have turned away from its

author. I know not what this people have understood by the beginning and ending of God (Exalted is His Name!). If by beginning and ending, a temporal beginning and ending be intended, the worldly things have not yet come to an end. How then can ending be true of that Essence of Oneness? Nay rather, in this station the beginning is none other than the ending, and vice versa.

To resume: As in the station of "Beginning before which there is no beginning," the station of the "End" becomes true of that Educator of the Seen and Unseen, likewise the same becomes true of His Manifestations. While the name "Beginning" is true (of them), at the same time the name "End" is also true, and while they are established upon the seat of being the "Beginning," at the same time they occupy the throne of being the "End." Should a discerning sight be found, it will perceive that these Holy Essences, Abstracted Spirits and Divine Souls are the Manifestors of the "First," the "Last," the "Manifest," the "Hidden," the "Beginning," and the "End." Shouldst thou soar in the atmosphere of "There was God and nothing was with Him," thou wilt find all these Names as mere nothingness and utter absence in that court, and then thou wilt not be masked by these veils, allusions and sayings. How pure and lofty is this station, to which even Gabriel cannot find the way without a guide, and whereunto the celestial bird cannot soar without the Invisible Assistance!

Understand what His Holiness, the Commander ¹ (of the Faithful) hath said—"Unfolding the veils of glory without allusion." Among the veils of glory are the religious doctors of the age, and the theologians of the time of a Manifestation, who do not submit to the Command of God on account of their lack of understanding and their devotion and love for outward leadership. Nay rather, they do not listen to hear the Divine Melody, and "they put their fingers in their ears" (K. S. 2). As the people have taken them in place of God for their masters, they await acceptance or rejection (of the Truth) by these supporting props; for they have no sight, hearing or heart of their own to distinguish and discriminate between truth and falsehood.

Though all the Prophets, Chosen Ones and Holy Ones have commanded on the part of God that they should see and hear with their own eyes and ears, yet disregarding the exhortations of the Prophets, they have followed and will follow their divines. Should a needy and poor one destitute of the clothing of men of learning say—"O people: Follow the Messengers of God" (K. S. 36), they will wonder exceedingly at such a statement and answer—"When all these learned and cultured men with outward leadership and rich and magnificent apparel have not understood and have failed to distinguish truth from falsehood, how couldst thou and those like thee understand?" If

¹ Ali, in answer to the question, "What is Truth?"

number and the garb of learning be a proof and indication of knowledge and truth, the former peoples¹ should prove more worthy and superior, for they are greater and more numerous.

The point is also clear and evident that the divines of the age have prevented people from the path of truth at the time of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations. This is recorded and stated in all the Heavenly Books and Epistles. No Prophet was sent forth who did not become the object of hatred, denial, rejection and execration by the divines. May God denounce them for what they have done formerly and are now doing! What veils of glory are greater than these temples of error? By God, removing these veils of glory is the greatest affair, and rending them asunder is the mightiest action! May God strengthen us and you, O concourse of Spirit, that ye may succeed in this in the time of "Mustagath,"² and be not veiled from the Meeting of God in His Day.

Furthermore, the term "Seal of the Prophets," and the like, constitute "veils of glory," the removal of which is the most important matter for these worthless creatures. All are screened by these limited coverings and heavy veils of glory. Have they not heard the melody of the Divine Bird (Ali) saying, "I have

¹ Adherents of former religions who deny a Manifestation in His Day.

² Literally, "the one from whom help is sought." This term was used by the Báb to denote the time of the appearance of "Him whom God shall manifest," i.e. BAHÁ'U'LLAH.

married one thousand Fatimas, all of whom were the daughters of Mohammed the Son of Abdallah, the ' Seal of the Prophets '?"

Consider how many mysteries are hidden in the tents of the Knowledge of God, and what jewels of His Wisdom are concealed in the treasuries of preservation, so that thou mayest be convinced that there hath been and will be neither beginning nor end to His creation. The Space of His Destiny is too vast to be limited by explanation or traversed by the bird of minds and His ordained decrees are beyond attainment by any comprehension. His creation hath been from the " Beginning before which there is no beginning," and no "End" hath overtaken it. The Manifestations of His Beauty will be until the interminable End; and no Beginning hath beheld Him.

Consider this same explanation, and how truly it can be applied to all these Faces. Likewise understand the saying of the Eternal Beauty—Hosein the son of Ali—to Salman, the import of which is this: " I was with a thousand Adams; the interval between each and the next Adam was fifty thousand years, and to every one of these I declared the Walayat (succession) of my father (Ali)." Then he mentions certain particulars until he says, " I have fought one thousand battles in the path of God, the least and smallest of which was like the battle of Khaibar, in which my father strove and fought against the infidels." Thus understand from these two traditions the mysteries of

“ end,” “ return,” and “ creation without beginning or end.”

Briefly: O my beloved, the melody of the Divine world is sanctified above limitation by earthly hearing and minds. How can the ant of existence step into the court of the Adored One? Yet weak souls deny these abstruse explanations and reject similar traditions through lack of understanding. Yea, only the spiritually minded can understand this. Say—this is an End to which there is no end in the creation, and a Beginning for which there is no beginning in the world of origin. So O concourse of the earth ye may behold the splendor of the End in the Manifestations of the Beginning.

It is a great astonishment that these people adhere to the verses revealed in the Koran and to the traditions of the possessors of Assurance (Imams), only in instances which accord with their own wish and desire, entirely rejecting others which are contrary to their inclination. “ Do ye, therefore, believe in part of the Book and reject other parts thereof (K.S. 2) ?” How then could ye judge that of which ye are ignorant? For in the Perspicuous Book, the Lord of the creatures, after speaking of “ The Seal ” in His exalted saying, “ Mohammed is but the Messenger of God and the Seal of the Prophets” (K. S. 3), hath promised His Own Meeting to all the people. The verses indicating the “ Meeting ” of that King of Eternity are recorded in the Book, and some have been already

mentioned. The one God testifies that no greater and clearer point than " Meeting " hath been recorded in the Koran. May it be profitable unto those who attain to it in a day wherein most of the people turn away therefrom; even as ye witness!

Nevertheless they have rejected the second matter (Meeting) on account of the first (Seal of Prophethood), although the subject of " Meeting " in the day of resurrection is clearly stated in the Book. Through clear evidences it hath been demonstrated and realized that by " resurrection " is meant the rise of His Manifestation in His Command. Likewise by " Meeting " is intended the Meeting of His Beauty in the Temple of His Manifestation. " For verily, Him the sight comprehendeth not, but He comprehendeth the sight " (K. S. 6). Notwithstanding all these confirmed facts and clear explanations, they have ignorantly clung to the statement of the " Seal," and are entirely veiled from the Originator of the " End and Beginning," in the day of His Meeting. " If God should punish men for their iniquity, He would not leave (upon) the earth any moving thing, but He giveth them respite until an appointed time " (K. S. 16). But apart from all these things; if this people had drunk a single drop from the clear fountain of " God doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordereth whatsoever He desireth," they would not have advanced any such oppositions to the Point of Command.

Command, word and action are in the grasp of His

power. "Everything is made captive in the Grasp of His power, and verily this is easy and practicable unto Him." He is the doer of that which He desireth, and the accomplisher of that which He wisheth. "Whosoever says 'Why and for what reason,' loseth his faith." Should these servants become conscious of what they have committed, they shall perish and lead themselves with their own hands to the fire which is their dwelling and goal. Have they not heard the saying: "He shall not be questioned as to what He doeth" (K. S. 21)? In view of these explanations, how can one venture to occupy himself with vain sayings?

Praise be to God! The ignorance and blindness of the servants have reached such a pitch and limit that they have followed their own knowledge and desire, rejecting the Knowledge and Desire of the True One, Exalted and Mighty is He!

Now be just: if these servants believed firmly in similar brilliant words and holy references, and considered God to be the "doer of whatever He wisheth," they could not cling and hold fast to these vain sayings. Nay rather, with all their souls they would acknowledge and submit to that which He says. I swear by God that if the ordained decrees and destined wisdoms had not been already established, the earth would have destroyed all these servants; "but God will delay this until the appointed time of a known day."

To be brief: Twelve hundred and seventy-eight

years have passed since the Manifestation of the Point of the Koran, and these worthless creatures have recited the Koran every morning, still they have not attained to a single letter of the purport, and although some of the verses they read clearly indicate the holy facts and the Manifestation of Eternal Might, yet they have utterly failed to understand. During this time they have not even comprehended that in every age the purpose of reading the Books and reciting the Epistles hath been to penetrate the significances and to reach the summits of their mysteries; otherwise reading without understanding is of no great benefit.

For instance, one day a certain person was present before this One who is needy of the sea of significances, and mention was made concerning the signs of the day of judgment, resurrection, revival and reckoning. He insisted (upon knowing) how in this new Manifestation the account of the people is settled, when no one is informed of it. Then We revealed certain scientific illustrations and philosophical points according to the understanding and comprehension of the hearer. Afterward We asked, "Hast thou not read the Koran, and hast thou not seen this blessed verse: 'On that day neither man nor genii shall be asked concerning his sin' (K. S. 55)? Hast thou not understood that the meaning of 'questioning' is not with tongue and speech, as is evidenced and proved by the same verse?" For afterward it is said: "The sin-

ners shall be known by their faces, and they shall be taken by the forelocks and the feet " (K. S. 55). Thus the account of the creatures is judged from the face, and their unbelief, faith or sin will appear; just as in this day it is evident that the people of error and the followers of guidance are known and distinguished from each other by the face.

If these servants, sincerely for the sake of God, and desiring His Good Pleasure, look into the verses of the Book, they will undoubtedly understand all they seek. They will clearly and plainly find there, in full particular, all the events which have happened during this Dispensation; even the Manifestations of the Names and Attributes coming out of nativities of opposition and superciliousness of government and people, and the residence and establishment of the Universal Manifestation in a special and designated land. Only the spiritually minded can understand this. We seal the saying by that which was formerly revealed unto Mohammed, so that this seal may be the musk which will guide people to the brilliant Rizwan of holiness. He hath said, and His saying is truth—in order that this favor may surround the world—"God inviteth unto the ¹ Dwelling of Peace and directeth whom He pleaseth unto the right way" (K. S. 10). "They shall have a dwelling of peace with their Lord, and He shall be their protector, because of that which they have

¹ Baghdad, where BAHÁ'U'LLAH was exiled.

wrought " (K. S. 6). Praise be to God the Lord of the creatures!

Upon every subject We have repeated Our explanation that perchance each soul, high or low, may gain a share and portion thereof, according to his capacity and measure; and that should a soul be unable to understand one explanation, the purpose may be apprehended in another. " That each may know his respective drinking-place " (K. S. 7).

I swear by God that this earthly Dove hath many songs besides these melodies, and many signs besides these explanations, every point of which is sanctified above what hath been explained and hath flowed from the pen. When the Divine Will decrees, the brides of significances, unveiled, will take the step of manifestation from the Spiritual Mansion into the Court of Pre-existence. There is no command unless it is His permission; there is no power unless through His power and strength; and there is no other God than He. He is the creation and command. All speak by His command and through the mysteries of the Spirit!

We have formerly explained two stations for the Suns rising from the Day-springs of Divinity. One is the station of Unity and condition of Oneness, as previously mentioned. " We make no distinction between any of them " (K. S. 2). The other station is that of distinction, creation and human limitations. In this station, for each one a temple is designated, a mission

is indicated, a manifestation is decreed, and certain limitations are assigned. Each one is named by a certain name, characterized by a quality and appointed to a new Cause and Law; as it is said: "These are the Messengers; We have preferred some of them before others: Some of them hath God spoken unto, and hath exalted the degree of others of them. And we gave unto Jesus, the Son of Mary, manifest signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit" (K. S. 2).

It is due to the variance of these stations and conditions that different words and explanations appear from those Fountains of Divine Knowledge, but in reality all the intricate Divine subjects are regarded as one utterance by the knowing. As most of the people are not acquainted with the mentioned conditions, they are troubled and confounded by the different words of those united Temples.

To be brief: It is evident that all these differences of words are due to the differences of stations. Therefore in the station of Oneness and rank of Singleness, pure Sublimity, Divinity, Unity and absolute Deity have been and are applied to those Essences of Existence, because they are all seated upon the throne of the "Manifestation of God," and established upon the seat of the "Botoon¹ of God"—that is, the appearance of God is made manifest by their appearance and the beauty of God is revealed by their beauty.

¹ Lit. "concealment." The station of undeclared Manifestation.

Thus it is that melodies of Divinity have proceeded from these Temples of Unity.

As to the second station, which is that of distinction, separation, limitation, and temporal conditions and indications, they show forth absolute servitude, real need and utter lowliness; as it is said, " Verily, I am the servant of God," and, "Verily, I am only a man like you " (K. S. 41).

From these confirmed and positive explanations, understand the questions which thou hast asked, so that thou mayest become firm in the Divine religion and be not perplexed by the differences in the utterances of the Prophets and Chosen Ones.

If it be heard from the perfect Manifestations " Verily, I am God," it is true and without doubt; for it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Manifestation, Attributes, and Names, the Manifestation of God, the Attribute of God, and the Name of God appear upon earth. Thus it is said "Neither didst thou (O Mohammed) cast (the gravel into their eyes) when thou didst (seem to) cast (it), but God cast (it) " (K. S. 8). Likewise: " Verily, they who swear fealty unto thee, swear fealty unto God, etc." (K. S. 48). Should they utter the melody: " Verily, I am the Messenger of God," this is also correct and without doubt; as it is said, " Mohammed is not the father of any man among you; but he is the Messenger of God, etc." (K. S. 33). In this station, all are sent forth from the presence of that Ideal King and Eternal

Essence. If all of them raise the call, "I am the Seal (last) of the Prophets," it is also true and beyond reach and access of uncertainty, because all are accounted as one soul, one essence, one spirit, one body, one command, and are the Manifestors of the states of the "Beginning," the "End," the "First," the "Last," the "Manifest," the "Hidden" of that ideal Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences. Likewise if they say, "We are the servants of God," this is also confirmed and evident, for outwardly they have appeared with the utmost degree of servitude. No one hath the courage to appear in the world with that manner of servitude. Thus those Essences of Existence, when submerged in the seas of Eternal Holiness and when ascending to the summits of the significances of the Ideal King, uttered declarations of Unity and Deity. Were one to consider attentively he will find that even in this state they witnessed in themselves the utmost humility and lowliness in presence of the Absolute Existence and Real Life, as though accounting themselves utter non-existence and deeming their own mention in that court as polytheism. For in this station any mention would be an indication of being and existence, and this is considered a great error by the attained ones. How much greater (error) to mention aught else, or that the heart, tongue, mind and soul be occupied in any other mention than the Beloved One; that the eye should look upon other than His beauty, the ear hear other than His melody, or the feet walk in other than His path.

At this time the breeze of God is wafted and the Spirit of God hath surrounded. The pen is withheld from motion and the tongue hath ceased utterance. Briefly: In this station the declaration of Divinity and the like have appeared from them, while in the station of Messengership they have declared Prophethood. Likewise in every station they have made a declaration expedient thereto and have attributed all these to themselves; (declarations) concerning the world of command, the world of creation, the worlds of divinity, and the worlds of phenomena. Therefore whatever they may say and claim, including Divinity, Deity, Prophethood, Messengership, Successorship, Imamat or Servitude is true and without doubt. Consequently these proven statements should be reflected upon, that no one may be overtaken by perplexity and trouble concerning the differences in the sayings of the Manifestations of the Invisible and Dawning-places of Holiness.

Briefly: one must ponder over the Words of the Suns of Truth, and if they are not understood, they should be submitted to those who are custodians of the depositories of Knowledge, in order that they may explain and remove the difficulty. One should not interpret the holy Words according to his own imperfect judgment and then, finding them inconsistent with his own inclination and desire, proceed to reject and deny—as do the doctors and theologians of the age who are seated upon the platform of knowledge and learning, and who call ignorance knowledge and oppression

justice. Should they ask the Ideal Sun concerning their imaginary notions and find the answer at variance with what they have conceived or understood from the book of one similar to themselves, they unquestionably would ascribe ignorance to that mine and source of Knowledge. This hath happened in every age.

For instance, when they asked that Lord of the Existence (Mohammed) concerning the phases of the moon, He answered by the command of God: " They are times appointed unto men " (K. S. 2). Hearing this, they attributed ignorance to His Holiness.

Likewise in the verse concerning the " Spirit," in which it is said, " They will ask thee regarding the Spirit; answer, The Spirit (is) by the Command of my Lord " (K. S. 17). When this answer was given, they all raised the cry of " Woe! an ignorant one who knows not what the Spirit is, claims to be endowed with the Immediate Knowledge! " In this day, as the divines of the age are honored by the name of His Holiness, and see that their fathers believed in Him, they accept His command in blind conformity. But if they be just and hear similar answers in reply to similar questions, they will undoubtedly reject, deny and repeat those very sayings, as they have already done. All this, notwithstanding those Essences of Existence are sanctified above these pseudo knowledges, purified above these limited words and exalted beyond the understanding of every knowing one. All such learnings

are absolute falsity in the presence of that Knowledge, and all these conceptions are downright deceit. Nay rather, Knowledge is that which proceeds from those mines of Divine Wisdom and those depositories of eternal Knowledge. "Knowledge is one point, but the ignorant have multiplied it," is a proof of this; and "Knowledge is a light which God sheds into the heart of whomsoever He wisheth" confirms this statement.

Briefly: As they have not comprehended the meaning of Knowledge, and have termed their own spurious ideas which have originated from manifestors of ignorance, knowledge, therefore they have inflicted upon the source of Knowledge that which ye have seen and heard.

For instance, in a book written by one of the servants reputed for knowledge and learning, who considers himself prominent among the people, all the rightly guided men of learning have been rejected and denounced. This appears by allusion and plain statement throughout the entire book. As We had frequently heard of him, We desired to see some of his writings, although not disposed to refer to the words of others; but as some had questioned and inquired concerning him, it became necessary to see his writings in order to answer the questioners with intelligence and understanding. Briefly: his Arabic books were not available, but one day it was mentioned that one of his works, entitled "Irshad'Ul-Awam" (Direction for

the Common People), could be found in this city (Baghdad). The odor of pride and arrogance was inhaled from this title, for he hath assumed the people to be ignorant and himself learned. All his characteristics were in fact evident by the very title of the book, indicating that he walks in the path of egotism and desire, and dwells in the desert of ignorance and blindness. He hath peradventure forgotten the well-known tradition, saying: "Knowledge signifies all that which is knowable, and power and might signify all that which is created." However We sent for the book and it remained with this Servant a few days. It was probably referred to twice. The second time We came by chance to a certain part relating to the "¹Ascent" of the Master of "²Were it not for thee." We found he had made knowledge of the "Ascent" conditional upon the understanding of some twenty or more sciences, implying that if one were not thoroughly acquainted with them, he could not attain to the knowledge of this lofty and exalted matter. Among them he had mentioned philosophy, alchemy and natural magic, making understanding of the eternal and holy Knowledges conditional upon possession of these mortal and rejected sciences.

Praise be to God! With such understanding, what calumnies and animadversions he hath brought upon

¹ The Night Journey of Mohammed with Gabriel.

² One of the titles of Mohammed, taken from a tradition which relates that God said unto Him, "Were it not for thee, I would not have created the spheres."

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the Temples of the Knowledge of God! How well it is said, "Dost thou arraign those whom the True One hath made trustees of the treasures of the Seventh Sphere?" No one among the people of perception and knowledge, or among the wise and intelligent hath noticed these absurdities. Yet it is clear and evident to every one endowed with perception that such sciences have ever been and are rejected by the True One. How can the understanding of sciences which are rejected among the truly learned be essential to the knowledge of the summits of the "Ascent," while the Lord of the "Ascent" hath not sanctioned a single letter of these limited and discarded sciences, and the brilliant heart of that Master of "Were it not for thee" was sanctified and purified from all these allusions? How excellent is the saying: "All these conceptions are on lame asses, while Truth rides upon the wind and flies like an arrow." By God, whosoever desireth to know the mystery of "Ascent," or drink a drop from the Knowledge of this Sea, should he possess these sciences,—that is, if the mirror of his heart be marred with their stain,—must clear and purify it before the mystery of this point may reflect therein.

In this day, divers in the Sea of Eternal Knowledges and dwellers in the Ark of Divine Wisdom forbid people from studying such sciences. Their shining breasts, praise be to God, are purified from these allusions and sanctified from these veils. We have consumed the greatest veil, in the saying "Learning is

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the greatest veil," with the fire of the love of the Friend, and have raised another tent. And We glory in this, that We have burned the "veils of glory," praise be to God, with the fire of the beauty of the Beloved, and have placed none other than the Desired One in the mind and heart. Neither do We adhere to any knowledge but His Knowledge, nor cling to anything knowable save the splendor of His Lights.

To be brief: We were much astonished to find that by these statements he only wished to intimate that he possessed all these sciences, though I swear by God, he hath not felt a breeze from the garden of Divine Knowledge, nor is he informed of a single letter of the mysteries of Supreme Wisdom. Nay rather, should the meaning of Knowledge be explained, he would undoubtedly be confounded and the mountain of his being would be levelled. Notwithstanding his trivial and shallow statements, what extravagant claims he hath made!

Glory be to God! How We wonder at the people who have accepted and followed such a person! They are contented with the dust and adhere to it, rejecting the Lord of Lords; satisfied with the cry of the crow and visage of the raven, renouncing the melody of the nightingale and the beauty of the rose. Many things were seen among the spurious words of this book. Alas indeed that the pen should be employed in the mention of them, or that time should be wasted

therein. But should a touchstone be found, truth would be distinguished from falsehood, light from darkness, and sun from shadow.

Among the sciences which this man professes is that of Alchemy. We earnestly desire that a king or a man of influence should require him to demonstrate this science from the world of words into the world of actuality, and this humble and unlearned one who hath not professed such sciences, nor considered their possession or lack either conducive to knowledge or ignorance, would undertake the same achievement in order that the truth and falsehood might be known. But of what avail! We have experienced nothing from the people of this day but the wounds of spears, and tasted naught else but deadly poison. The marks made by iron are still visible upon the neck, and the signs of oppression are still apparent upon the whole body.

Concerning the grades of his learning, ignorance, knowledge and assurance, it is recorded in a Book, from which nothing is omitted, " Verily (the fruit of) the tree of El-Zakkum¹ (shall be) the food of the Atheem (sinner) " (K. S. 44). Then other statements are made, ending in this saying: " Taste thou this, thou art the mighty Karim " (honorable person). Notice how clearly and explicitly his description is given in the Perspicuous Book. In his own book this person hath called himself the "Atheem servant," by

¹ A tree in Inferno.

way of humility: "Atheem" in the book, mighty among the "common people," "Karim" in name.

Reflect upon the blessed verse so that the meaning of "(there is) neither a green (wet) thing, nor a dry thing, except it is (written) in the Perspicuous Book" (K. S. 6), may be inscribed upon the tablet of the heart. Notwithstanding all this, a number have followed him, turning away from the Moses of Knowledge and justice, and clinging to the Sameri¹ of ignorance. They have rejected the Sun of Significances which is shining in the eternal Heaven of Divinity, deeming it not to exist.

To be brief: O my brother, the gems of the Supreme Knowledge can only be obtained from the Divine Mine, the fragrance of the Ideal Myrtle can only be inhaled from the Rose-garden of Reality, and the Flowers of the Knowledge of Unity only grow in the city of pure hearts. "From a good ground shall its fruit spring forth (abundantly), by the permission of its Lord; but from the land which is bad it shall not spring forth but scantily" (K. S. 7).

As it hath been shown that no one can enjoy the melodies of the Divine Nightingale save those who are custodians thereof, it is necessary and obligatory for everyone to submit the difficulties of the Divine questions and intricacies in the references of the Dawning-places of Holiness, to the possessors of brilliant hearts and the bearers of the mysteries of Unity; so that the

¹ A magician contemporary with Moses, who made the speaking calf.

questions may be solved through the supreme confirmation and Divine bounties, and not by the assistance of acquired sciences. "Enquire, therefore, of those who have the custody of the Scriptures" (K. S. 16).

But O my brother, when a seeker intends to turn the step of search and journeying into the path of the Knowledge of the King of Pre-existence, he must first cleanse and purify his heart—which is the place of the appearance and emanation of the splendor of the hidden mysteries of Divinity, and he must cleanse and refine his breast—which is the throne for the accession and establishment of the love of the Eternal Beloved—from all the gloomy dusts of acquired learnings and from the allusions of satanic appearances. He must likewise sanctify his heart from attachment to water and clay—that is, from all phantasmal forms and spectral images—in such manner that no trace of love or hatred may remain in the heart, lest that love may cause him to incline toward a direction without guide, or that hatred prevent him from another direction; just as in this day, most are bereft of the immortal Face and of the threshold of Meanings, because of these two tendencies, and are grazing shepherdless in the deserts of error and oblivion. He should at all times trust in God, and turn away from the creatures; be severed and detached from the world of dust and united with the Lord of Lords; not preferring his own self before any one, but cleansing the tablet of the

heart from pride and vainglory; attaching the heart to patience and self-restraint; observing silence and avoiding useless speech; for the tongue is a smouldering fire and loquacity is a deadly poison. Material fire devours bodies, but the fire of the tongue consumes souls and minds. The effect of the former vanishes in an hour, but the latter continues for a century.

He should consider backbiting as error, and never step into that court, for backbiting extinguishes the brilliant light of the heart and numbs the life of the soul. He should be content with little and free from avarice; profiting by the companionship of the severed ones and regarding seclusion from haughty and worldly people as a benefit. At dawn he should be engaged in commemorations, seeking for that Beloved One with the utmost earnestness and power; consuming heedlessness with the fire of love and praise; passing over all else save God with the swiftness of lightning; bestowing a portion upon the destitute, and not refusing benevolence and favor to the unfortunate. He should show kindness to the animals; how much more to mankind, (especially) to the people of the Beyan; refusing not his life for the Beloved and turning not away from the True One when reproached by the creatures. He should not wish for others what he doth not wish for himself, nor say that which he will not fulfil; keeping aloof from evil doers with all determination, and asking the forgiveness of God in

their behalf ; condoning the sinners and despising them not, for the end is not known. Many a sinner who is favored with the essence of faith at the time of death, drinks the wine of immortality and hastens to the Supreme Concourse ; while many a believing and obedient one is estranged at the time of the soul's departure, and dwells in the lowest abyss of fire. Briefly : by all these sound explanations and valid references, it is meant that the traveller and seeker should consider all else save God mortal and account all but the Adored One as nothing.

These conditions form the attributes of the lofty ones and nature of the spiritual ones. This hath already been mentioned concerning the requirements of the striver and the conduct of travellers in the highways of Positive Knowledge. When these conditions are realized in a sincere seeker and an unrestrained traveller, then the term "striver" becomes true concerning him. When he is confirmed in the performance of "those who strive in us," he will surely enjoy the glad tidings of "We will direct them into our ways" (K. S. 29).

When the lamp of search, effort, longing, fervor, love, rapture, attraction and devotion is enkindled in the heart, and the breeze of love blows forth from the direction of Unity, the darkness of error, doubt and uncertainty will be dispelled and the lights of Knowledge and assurance will encompass all the pillars of existence. Then the ideal Herald will dawn as the

true morn from the Divine City, with spiritual glad tidings, and awaken the heart, soul and spirit from the sleep of negligence, with the trumpet of Knowledge. Then the favors and confirmations of the eternal Holy Spirit will impart such a new life that one will find himself the possessor of a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind, and will direct his attention to the clear, universal signs and to the hidden individual secrets. With the new eye of God he will see a door open in every atom for attainment to the stations of positive Knowledge, certain truth and evident light, and will perceive in all things the mysteries of the splendor of Oneness and the traces of the Manifestation of Eternity.

I swear by God, should the traveller in the path of salvation and the seeker for the summits of righteousness attain to this supreme and lofty state, he will inhale the fragrance of the True One from remote distances (lit. parasangs) and discern the brilliant morn of guidance from the Day-spring of All Things. Every atom and object will direct him to the Beloved and the Desired One. He will become so discerning that he will distinguish truth from falsehood as the sun from shadow. For example ; if the breeze of truth should blow forth from the east of creation, he will surely inhale it in the west of emanation. Likewise he will distinguish all the signs of the True One—such as wonderful words, incomparable deeds and brilliant actions—from the deeds, actions and traces of

all else, just as the jeweller distinguishes the gem from stone, and man the spring from autumn and heat from cold. When the head of the soul is purified from the ailment (lit. cold) of the contingent and existent, it will unfailingly discover the fragrance of the Beloved from distant stations, arrive at the city of the assurance of His Highness the Beneficent, through the effect of this fragrance, and behold the wonders of the Wisdom of His Highness the Most Holy, in that spiritual city. It will detect the hidden knowledges from the forms of the leaves of the tree of that city, hear the glorification and praise of the Lord of Lords from its soil, with the outward and inward ears, and perceive the mysteries of "advent" and "return" with the outward eye. What shall We mention of the signs, tokens, appearances and splendors ordained in that city, by the command of the King of Names and Attributes! It quencheth thirst without water, and increaseth the heat of the love of God without fire. The ideal consummate Wisdom is hidden in every plant, and a thousand nightingales of speech are in ecstasy and rapture upon every rose branch. The mystery of the fire of Moses is revealed in its wonderful tulips, and the breath of the Holy Spirit of Jesus emanates from its fragrances of holiness. It bestows wealth without gold and grants immortality without death. A paradise is concealed in every leaf, and a hundred thousand wisdoms are treasured in every one of its chambers. Those who earnestly endeavor in the way

of God, after severance from all else, will become so attached to that city that they will not abandon it for an instant. They will hear conclusive proofs from the hyacinth of that assembly and will receive clear arguments from the beauty of the rose and the melody of the nightingale. This city is renewed and adorned every one thousand years, more or less. Therefore O my friend, we must make an effort to attain to that city and remove the veils of glory, through Divine favors and Lordly compassion, so that we may sacrifice the withered soul in the path of the New Beloved, and show forth a hundred thousand supplications and humiliations in order to be favored with that attainment. This city is none other than the "Divine Book" in every age. For instance, in the age of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the time of Jesus, the Gospel; in the day of Mohammed the Messenger of God, the Koran; in this age, the Beyan; and in the Day of "Him whom God shall send forth," His Book, which is the return of all the Books and their guardian. In these cities, sustenance is provided and eternal blessings are appointed. They bestow spiritual food and provide pre-existent benefit. They confer the wealth of Unity upon the people of abstraction, bestow a portion upon the portionless, and favor the wanderers in the desert of ignorance with the cup of Knowledge. In these cities are treasured and deposited the guidance, favor, knowledge, understanding, faith and assurance of all in the heavens and earth.

For example; the Koran was a solid stronghold for the people of the Messenger, and those who entered therein in His day were protected from the assault of devils, the spear of opposers, uprooting doubts, and polytheistic suggestions. They also partook of the pure fruits of Unity and the crop of Wisdom from the Divine Tree; drank from the rivers of the incorruptible water of Knowledge and tasted the wine of the mysteries of Oneness and Singleness.

All the requirements of that people, such as the precepts of the religion and the law of the Lord of the Messengers, were supplied and determined in that manifest Rizwan. It was a lasting proof for its adherents after the Point of the Koran, for its decree is sound, its command unfailing, and all have been enjoined to obey it until the new Manifestation in the year "sixty."¹ It leads seekers to the Rizwan of Union and causes endeavorers and emigrants to reach the tent of Nearness. It is a valid evidence and mighty proof, while others, such as books, records and traditions have not this excellence; for the words and existence of traditions and their authors are proven and confirmed by the text of the Book. Moreover, in the traditions discrepancies are many and obscurities are numberless.

At the end of His mission, the Point of the Koran said: "Verily, I leave two weights among you; the Book of God and my Family" (the Twelve Imams).

¹ 1260 A. H. — The year of the declaration of the Báb and the birth of ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Although many traditions were revealed from that source of Prophethood and mine of Guidance, yet He mentioned only the Book, appointing it the greatest means and weightiest proof for the seekers; a guide for the servants until the day of resurrection.

Consider with the eye of justice, with a pure heart and chaste soul, what God hath established as a proof for His servants' knowledge, in His Book, which is accepted by both high and low, so that this servant, you, and all in the earth, relying upon its light, may distinguish and separate truth from falsehood, guidance from error. For the proof hath been restricted to two things, the Book and the Family. As to the Family, it hath passed away; so the proof is confined to the Book.

In the beginning of the Book it is said, "A. L. M. There is no uncertainty in this Book: It is a direction to the pious" (K. S. 2). In the intersected¹ letters of the Koran, mysteries of Divinity are concealed, and in their shells pearls of Unity are treasured which We do not mention for lack of space. Outwardly they signify His Holiness Himself, to whom is addressed: "O Mohammed, this Book revealed from the Heaven of Unity; there is no doubt or uncertainty in it; it contains guidance for the pious!" Consider that He hath appointed and ordained the Koran for the guidance of all in the heavens and earth. That Essence

¹ A. L. M. and other intersected letters which are at the head of 29 Suras of the Koran.

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of Unity and that Invisible Divinity hath Himself testified there is no doubt or uncertainty that it is the guide for the servants until the day of resurrection. Is it justice for these servants to doubt and distrust this mighty weight, to the truth of which God hath testified, and the veracity of which He hath declared? to turn away from a matter which God hath appointed the means of guidance and attainment to the summits of Knowledge and seek something else? or become sceptical through the vain sayings of people, and declare that some one said thus and so, or a certain thing did not come to pass? If there were any other matter or cause than the Divine Book as motive or evidence for the guidance of the people, it would undoubtedly be recorded in the mentioned verse.

To resume: We must not depart from the irrefutable command of God and the fixed decree of the Most High recorded in the above verse, but must acknowledge the wonderful Books; for if we do not acknowledge these Books, this blessed verse would be denied. And it is evident that whosoever hath not acknowledged the Koran hath not in reality accepted the Books which preceded it. These meanings are understood from the outward sense of the verse. Should We mention the concealed meanings and explain the hidden mysteries thereof, time undoubtedly would not bring them to a conclusion and the world could not bear them. God testifieth to what We say!

Likewise it is said in another place: "If ye be in

doubt concerning (the Book) which We have sent down unto our servant (Mohammed), produce a surat like unto it, and call upon your witnesses besides God, if ye say truth " (K. S. 2). The outward translation of this verse is: If ye be in doubt and hesitation concerning what We have sent down to our servant Mohammed, produce one like unto these revealed surats and call upon your witnesses—your learned men—that they may assist you in revealing the surat; if ye are of those who speak truth.

Consider how great is the value and how paramount the importance of the verses in which God hath completed His perfect argument, consummate proof, dominant power and penetrating will. In the declaration of His proof, that King of Unity hath not conjoined anything with them, for among proofs and evidence, verses are like unto the sun, while all others are as stars. To the people they are everlasting proof, fixed argument and shining light from the presence of that Ideal King. No excellence equals them and nothing precedes them. They are the treasury of Divine pearls and the depository of the mysteries of Unity. They are the strong thread, the firm rope, the most secure handle and the inextinguishable light. Through them flows the river of the Divine Knowledge, and bursts the fire of the consummate Wisdom of the Eternal. This is a fire from which two effects proceed at the same time: It creates the heat of love within the people of faith, and produces the cold of

heedlessness within the people of hatred. O friend, we must not depart from the command of God, but acquiesce and submit to that which He hath appointed to be His proof.

To resume: The proof and argument in this verse is too great for this humble one to furnish evidence. God speaketh truth and pointeth to the path. He is supreme over His servants; He is the Mighty, the Beautiful!

Likewise it is said: "These are the verses of God; We rehearse them unto thee with truth. In what revelation, therefore, will they believe, after God and His verses" (K. S. 45)? He says: These are the verses revealed from the Heaven of Divinity, which we rehearse unto thee; then in what words will they believe after the appearance of the True One, and the revelation of His verses?

Shouldst thou grasp the import of this verse, thou wilt understand that there hath been no manifestor greater than the Prophets, nor hath any proof mightier than the revealed verses appeared upon earth. Nay rather, no greater proof is possible except that which thy Lord willeth.

In another place it is said: "Woe unto every lying and impious person; who, when hearing the verses of God which are read unto him, proudly persisteth (in infidelity) as though he heard them not; announce unto him a painful punishment" (K. S. 45). That is, woe unto every deceitful sinner who heareth the

verses revealed from the Heaven of the Divine Will read unto him, then disputeth as though he heard them not. Announce thou a painful punishment unto him.

The references in this verse suffice for all in the heavens and earth, were people to look attentively into the verses of their Lord. So thou hearest in the present day, that when the Divine verses are read, no one taketh heed thereof, as though they were of the least importance, whereas nothing hath been nor will be greater than the verses. Say unto them, O imprudent people, ye are saying that which your fathers said in former times! If they saw any fruit from the tree of their contradiction, ye will see likewise! Before long ye will dwell in the fire with your fathers; fire is their station; evil is the abode of the unjust!

In another place it is said: "And when he who cometh to the knowledge of any of our verses and receiveth the same with scorn, for him (is prepared) a shameful punishment" (K. S. 45). For instance, they scoffed, saying: "Produce another miracle and bring forth another argument!" One said: "Cause thou a part of the heaven to fall upon us" (K. S. 26); and another: "O God, if this be truth from Thee, rain down stones upon us from heaven" (K. S. 8). As the Jews in the time of Moses exchanged the heavenly Table for such foul things as garlic and onions, likewise these people sought to exchange the revealed verses for impure and unclean imaginations. Similarly it is seen in this day that although the Ideal Table

is descending from the heaven of Divine mercy and from the clouds of celestial bounty, and although the seas of life are flowing and moving in the Rizwan of Paradise by the command of the Creator of all things, yet they are gathered like dogs around dead bodies, and are contented with a briny lake which is but bitter salt. Praise be to God! One is greatly astonished at such servants, who seek for proof after the banners of the proven are hoisted; who cling to the allusions of learning after the sun of the knowable hath appeared. It is like asking the sun for proof of its light, or the vernal shower for argument to demonstrate its bounty. The proof of the sun is its light which shines forth and encompasses the world; and the argument of the shower is its bounty which renews the world with a fresh mantle. Yea! The blind realize no effect in the sun but heat, and a barren soil knoweth no bounty from the vernal mercy.

“Be not astonished if from the Koran no portion is gained except its letters,

For in the sun, the eye of the blind findeth nothing but heat.”

In another place it is said: “And when our evident verses are rehearsed unto them, their argument (against the same) is no other than that they will say, Bring (to life) our fathers (who have been dead); if ye speak truth” (K. S. 45).

Consider what arguments they brought against those perfect and abundant mercies. They scorned

the verses, a single letter of which is greater than the creation of heavens and earth, and which quicken the dead in the valley of self and desire by the spirit of faith; and they said: "Bring forth our fathers from the grave." This was the contradiction and pride of the people. Each one of these verses is a sound proof and lofty argument for all in the earth, and sufficient for the people, were ye to meditate upon the verses of God.

In the same mentioned verse, pearls of mysteries are concealed. If a slight pain be found, the remedy will be provided.¹

Lend not thine ear to the vain statement of the servants who say that "the Book and verses cannot be proof to the common people because they neither understand nor comprehend them." The Koran is a proof to the east and the west. How could it be a proof, if the power of understanding it were not possessed by the people? According to their statement, none would be required to know God, nor would it be necessary; for the knowledge of Him is greater than the knowledge of His Book; and the common people would not possess the capacity to comprehend it.

To be brief: This statement is extremely vain and inadmissible, and emanates from pride and arrogance for the purpose of keeping the people afar from the Rizwan of the Good Pleasure of God, and grasping

¹ Idiomatic expression akin to "those who seek will find;" "those who thirst will be filled."

their reins tightly. Before God these common people are accepted and approved above the learned who have turned away from the True One. Understanding the Divine words and comprehension of the utterances of the Ideal Doves have no connection with outward learning, but depend upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. For at the present time there are some servants who have not seen a single letter of the forms of learning, yet they are seated upon the summit of Knowledge, the gardens of their hearts adorned with roses of Wisdom and tulips of Insight, through the cloud of the Divine Bounty. Blessed are the sincere ones through the lights of the Great Day!

Likewise it is said: “ (As to) those who believe not in the verses of God, or that they shall meet Him, they shall despair of My mercy, and for them is a painful punishment ” (K. S. 29). Also, “ And say—shall we abandon our gods for a distracted poet ” (K. S. 37)? The intent of this verse is clear. Consider what they said after the verses were revealed: “ Shall we abandon our gods for a distracted poet? ” They called His Holiness a poet, scoffed at the Divine verses, and said: “ These words are silly fables of ancient (times) ” (K. S. 6), meaning, these are words spoken in former times which Mohammed hath collected, declaring them to be from God. Likewise in this day, ye have heard the people ascribing similar things to this Cause, saying, “ He hath combined these words with the words of former times ”; or “ these words are

spurious." Their saying is scornful, and their rank and station lowered. After these mentioned denials and contradictions, they said that according to the Books, no independent Prophet should arise after Moses and Jesus to abolish the Law, but one should come who would consummate the Law. Therefore this blessed verse indicating all the Divine matter and proving that the bounties of the Merciful will never cease, was revealed: "Joseph came unto you before (Moses) with evident (signs); but ye ceased not to doubt of the (religion) which he preached unto you until, when he died, ye said, 'God will by no means send (another) apostle after him!' Thus doth God cause him to err who is a transgressor and a sceptic" (K. S. 40). Consequently understand from this verse and be convinced that in every age, the people clinging to a verse of the Book, have made similar vain statements that no other Prophet should appear in the world. For instance, the divines of the Gospel sought to prove through a formerly mentioned verse,¹ that the decree of the Gospel shall never be abolished and that no independent Prophet shall arise except to confirm the Law of the Gospel. Most of the nations are afflicted with the same soul-sickness. Ye behold how the people of the Koran, like former nations, are veiled by the statement: "The Seal of the Prophets." Although they themselves confess the saying: "Only God knoweth the interpretation thereof, and those

¹ Matt. xxiv., 35.

who are well-grounded in Knowledge " (K. S. 3), yet when He who is well-grounded in Knowledges, and who is their source, self, essence and identity explains it, finding it somewhat contrary to their desire, they say and do that which ye have heard. This proceeds only from the religious leaders, that is, from those who hold to no other God than desire, and find no creed except gold; who are veiled by the veils of learning and wander by reason of its error; just as the Lord of the creatures hath said with perfect clearness: "What thinkest thou? He who taketh his own lust for his God, and whom God causeth to err through a knowledge; and whose ears and whose heart He hath sealed up, and over whose eyes He hath cast a veil; who shall direct him after God? Will ye not, therefore, be admonished " (K. S. 45) ?

Although the outward meaning of "Whom God causeth to err through a knowledge " is as mentioned, yet to this humble one, by this verse is intended the learned divines of that age who turned aside from the beauty of the True One and depended upon their own learnings which proceeded from egotism and desire; disputing the Message of God and His Cause. "Say, it is a weighty Message from which ye turn aside " (K. S. 38). Likewise it is said: "When our evident signs are read unto them, they say (of thee, O Mohammed) This is no other than a man who seeketh to turn you aside from (the gods) which your fathers worshipped, and they say (of the Koran) This is no

other than a lie blasphemously forged " (K. S. 34). He truly says that when the holy verses of Unity are read unto infidels and sinners, those impious polytheists say, " The messenger of God is no other than a man who wishes to withhold you from that which was worshipped by your fathers "; and also, " This is no other than a lie blasphemously forged."

Hearken ye unto the Divine Voice of Holiness and the sweet melody of Eternity; how He hath by intimation warned those who falsely accuse the verses, and how He hath rejected those who deny the holy words. Consider also the remoteness of these people from the Kawther of Nearness, and the arrogance and denial of those bereft ones concerning that Beauty of Holiness. Although that Essence of Grace and Beneficence directed those temples of nonentity to the court of pre-existence and guided those really destitute ones to the sacred road of wealth, yet some said, " This man is no other than one who blasphemously accuses the Lord of the creatures "; others said, " This man withholds people from the path of religion and faith "; and still others accused Him of madness and the like. Similarly in this day ye witness what vain statements they have made against that Essence of Eternity (the BAB) and what accusations and evils they have attributed to that source and mine of infallibility. Although in the Divine Book and Supreme Holy Tablet God hath threatened those who falsely deny and reject the revealed verses, and hath announced good

tidings to those who accept them, yet how the verses revealed from the new Heavens of Holiness have been contradicted, notwithstanding the eye of the universe hath not seen such a bounty, nor the ear of the beings heard such favor as the flow and descent of verses like spring showers from the clouds of the mercy of the Merciful. Each one of the Prophets "endowed with constancy" whose greatness of rank and loftiness of stations are as clear and manifest as the sun was favored with but one Book which is still extant and its verses known. But so much hath descended (in this Day) from the clouds of the mercy of the Merciful that no one hath yet estimated it. Twenty volumes thereof are now available; what a quantity hath not yet come to hand! how much hath been plundered and is fallen into hands of the infidels, and it is not known what they have done with it!

O brother! We must open the eye, reflect, and appeal to the Divine Manifestations, that perchance we may be advised by the clear exhortations of the Book, and warned by the admonitions recorded in the Tablets; not contradicting the Revealer of the verses, but willingly obeying His command and accepting and submitting to His decree with all heart and soul, that we may enter the court of mercy and dwell upon the shore of bounty. "Verily, He is Merciful and Forgiving toward His servants" (K. S. 5).

Likewise it is said: "O ye who have received the Scriptures, do ye reject us (for any other reason) than

because we believe in God or on account of our belief in that (revelation) which hath been sent down unto us, or that which was formerly sent down—and for that reason only, are the greater part of ye transgressors ” (K. S. 5) ?

How clear is the purpose in this verse, and how evident it is that the revealed verses are a proof. This verse was revealed at a time when the infidels wronged the people of Islam and accused them of infidelity ; declaring that the companions of His Holiness had denied God and believed in a lying sorcerer. During the rise of Islam, when the Cause had outwardly no strength, wherever they met the friends of His Holiness, they would violently persecute, oppress, stone and curse those believers in God. At that time this blessed verse was revealed from the Heaven of Unity, with clear argument and evident proof, instructing the companions of His Holiness to say to the unbelievers and polytheists, “ Do ye torment and persecute us when no action hath proceeded from us except that we have believed in God, and in the verses revealed unto us through the tongue of Mohammed, and also in the verses which descended upon former Prophets ? ” They meant they had no sin except that of considering the new and wonderful Divine verses revealed to Mohammed, and the verses descended upon by-gone Prophets, to be from God, and acknowledging and submitting to them. This is a proof which the King of Unity hath taught His servants.

In view of this, should they turn away from these wonderful verses which have encompassed the east and west, at the same time considering themselves people of faith? Or should they believe in the Rēvealer of verses? Considering this demonstration which He Himself hath made, how could He fail to account as people of faith, those who acknowledge it? Far be it that He should turn those away from the doors of His mercy who believe and confess the verses of Unity, or threaten those who adhere to the confirmed proof! For verily He is the Confirmer of truth through His verses, and Establisher of the command through His words! Verily He is the Powerful, the Protector, the Omnipotent!

Likewise it is said: "Although had We caused to descend unto thee a book (written) on paper, and had they handled it with their hands, the unbelievers would still persist in saying, 'This is no other than manifest sorcery'" (K. S. 6). Most of the Koranic verses indicate and point to this fact; but this servant hath mentioned only these for the sake of brevity. Consider; hath He appointed in the whole Book anything but the verses as a proof for knowing the Manifestations of His Beauty, that they may cling to it and reject? Nay rather, in every instance He hath threatened with fire those who deny and scorn the verses, as already shown. Therefore should some one come with myriads (lit. half millions) of verses, homilies, epistles and communes, without having acquired them

through instruction, by what reason could one reject, and deprive himself of such great bounty? What answer could they give after the departure of the soul from the gloomy body? Could they assert that they depended upon a certain tradition, and not realizing its literal meaning, therefore denied the Manifestations of the Command and were kept afar from the paths of the True One? Have ye not heard that among the reasons why some of the Prophets were termed "endowed with constancy," was the revelation of a Book to them? This is certain. Notwithstanding, how can it be justifiable to follow the sayings of a certain person who, through ignorance, hath put into the hearts words for creating doubt, and who hath become the Satan of the age for confounding the servants and misleading all in the world; instead of (following) the Author of Books from whom many volumes have proceeded; thus depriving themselves of the sun of Divine bounty! Aside from these conditions, should they avoid and reject this Holy Soul and Merciful Breath, We know not to whom they shall adhere, and to what face they shall advance. Yea—"Every sect hath a certain direction to which they turn themselves" (K. S. 2). In these two courses, We have directed thee toward two paths; walk then in whichever thou wilt choose for thyself. This is a true saying, and after truth there is naught but error.

Among the proofs demonstrating this Cause is that in every time and age, when the Invisible Divinity ap-

peared in a human temple, some people who were of no repute, and who had no attachment for the world or any other object, sought illumination from the Sun of Prophethood, were directed to the lights of the Moon of Guidance and attained to the Meeting of God. For this reason, the divines of the age and the wealthy of the time derided; as is related of those erring ones—"Among His people the concourse of those who believed not said: 'We see thee (to be) no other than a man like unto us; and we do not see that any follow thee, except those who are the most abject among us, and are of a rash judgment, neither do we perceive any excellence in thee above us; but we deem you to be liars' " (K. S. 11).

They objected to those Holy Manifestations, saying that no one followed them except the abject who were not worthy of credence. They meant that the learned, wealthy and distinguished among the people did not believe in them. By this proof and the like they sought to demonstrate the falsity of the possessor of the Truth. But in this most obvious Manifestation and most Mighty Dominion, many of the rightly guided divines, accomplished men of learning, and excellent theologians were favored with the cup of Nearness and Meeting, and attained to the Most Great Favor, abandoning the world for the sake of the Beloved One. We mention some of their names that perchance it may conduce to the stability of agitated and troubled souls.

The Book of Ighan

Among them was His Honor, Mulla Hosein, who became the place upon which the sun of the Manifestation (BAB) dawned. Were it not for him, God would not have been seated upon the throne of His Mercifulness nor established upon the seat of His Divinity. Also His Honor, Aga Seyd-Yahya, who was unique and peerless in his day and time.

Mulla-Mohammed-Ali of Zinjan;

Mulla-Ali of Bastam;

Mulla-Said of Bar-foroosh;

Mulla Ni'mat'Ullah of Mazandiran;

Mulla Youssof of Ardabeel;

Mulla Mahdy of Khoy;

Aga-Seyd-Hosein of Torsheez;

Mulla-Mahdi of Kand;

Mulla-Bakir, his brother;

Mulla-Abdul-Khalik of Yazd;

Mulla Ali of Baragan;

and others similar, about four hundred, all of whose names are recorded in the "Preserved Tablet" of God.

All these confessed, obeyed and were guided to that Sun of Manifestation (BAB), to such an extent that most of them abandoned property and family, and joined themselves to the Good Pleasure of the Possessor of Glory. They sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Beloved One and expended all they possessed. Their breasts became targets for the arrows of the adversaries and their heads adorned the lances of the

infidels. No land remained which did not drink the blood of these abstracted souls and no sword that did not touch their necks. Their deeds are a sufficient proof of the truth of their words. Is not the testimony of these holy souls who in this manner gave life in the way of the Friend, and at the sacrifice of whose heart and soul the whole world was astonished, sufficient for these servants? Is it not witness against the denial of other servants who gave religion for gold, exchanged immortality for mortality, bartered the Kawther of Nearness for salt fountains, and who have no aim except seizing the property of people? For it is seen that all of them are occupied with the vanities of the world and have kept afar from the Supreme Lord. Now be just; whether the testimony of those is acceptable and credible whose deeds are consistent with their words, and whose outward is in accord with their inward, so that minds are bewildered at their deeds, and souls are astonished at their self-restraint, and at that which their bodies have endured? Or is the testimony of these opposers who do not breathe except in selfish desire, and are not delivered from the cage of false imaginations?—who lift not the head from the bed by day except to strive as the dark bat in search of the mortal world, and do not rest by night save to labor in planning for worthless things?—who are occupied with selfish designs and are heedless of the Divine decree?—who by day exert themselves diligently for livelihood, and by night seek to adorn the means of the

bed? Is it justified by any law or creed that people should cling to the contradiction of these limited souls and ignore the faith and acknowledgment of souls who have sacrificed life, property, name, office, reputation and honor in the Good Pleasure of the True One? Was not the matter of the "Lord of the Martyrs" (Hosein, son of Ali) formerly considered the greatest occurrence and mightiest proof of the truth of His Holiness? Was it not declared that no such event had happened in the world, and no truth had appeared with such steadfastness and evidence, although the incident of His Holiness extended only from morn till noon? Yet eighteen years have elapsed, during which, from all directions, calamities have fallen upon these holy lights like rain. With what love, affection, devotion and longing did they voluntarily expend life in the path of the Praised One, as is clear and evident to all! In view of this, how can they consider it a simple matter? Has such a momentous affair appeared in any age? If these companions be not strivers in God, who then shall be strivers? Were they seekers of honor, wealth or affluence? Had they any other purpose than the Good Pleasure of the True One? If, notwithstanding such wonderful evidences and marvellous deeds, all these companions be false, who then is worthy to claim truth? I swear by God that their very deeds are sufficient proof and clear evidence to all upon earth, were people to reflect upon the mysteries of the Command! "And they who

act unjustly shall soon know with what treatment they shall be treated " (K. S. 26).

Furthermore, the sign of truthfulness and that of falsehood is designated and appointed in the Book. The claims and pretensions of all the servants should be tested by this Divine touchstone, in order that it may distinguish the truthful from the false. This touchstone is " Wish for death if ye say truth " (K. S. 2). Consider these sincere martyrs, the truth of whose words is testified by the texts of the Book, and all of whom as ye have seen, expended life, property, wife, children, and all they possessed, and ascended to the highest chambers of the Rizwan. Yet the testimony of these lofty faces and severed souls in acknowledging this lofty and exalted Cause is not accepted; while the testimony of those people who have forsaken religion for gold and avoided the First Emanation (BAB) in order to occupy the high seat, is acceptable and allowable against this shining Light; even though all the people have known them, and have comprehended that they do not relinquish the least amount of outward temporal honor for the sake of the Divine Religion; how much less, life, property and the like!

Consider how, according to the text of the Book, the Divine touchstone hath differentiated and distinguished between the pure and impure; still these people are not mindful, and in the sleep of heedlessness are occupied in gaining the mortal world and outward leadership.

The Book of Ighan

O Son of man, days have already passed thee during which thou hast been occupied with the imaginations and superstitions prompted by thine egotism. How long wilt thou be asleep upon thy couch? Lift thy head from slumber, for verily the sun hath already reached mid-day; that it may shine upon thee with the lights of Beauty. Finis.

But let it be known that not one of these learned men and doctors already mentioned had any outward leadership. It is impossible for well-known and influential divines of the age, seated upon the high seat of command and established upon the throne of authority, to follow the True One; "except whomsoever thy Lord wishes." Save a few, no such thing hath appeared in the world, "for few of my servants are thankful" (K. S. 34). In this day, not one of the noted divines, in the grasp of whose authority are the reins of the people, hath believed; nay rather, they have exerted themselves in suppression, with such hatred and denial that no ear hath heard and no eye hath seen.

The Supreme Lord (BAB) (may the life of all else save Him be a sacrifice to Him!) hath especially revealed an Epistle to the learned divines of each city, wherein He hath mentioned in detail the grades of their opposition and arrogance. "Wherefore, take example (from them), O ye who have sight." By mentioning this he intended that during the Manifestation of "Mustagath" (BAHA) in the next resur-

rection, the people of the Beyan should not dispute (upon the ground) that "in the Manifestation of the Beyan, many of the learned divines did believe, therefore why does not this happen in this Manifestation"; and that they, God forbid, should cling to such trivial notions and be deprived of the Divine Beauty. Yea, most of the mentioned divines were not renowned, but by the grace of God they all were sanctified and purified from outward leadership and temporal vanities. "This is through the Bounty of God; He will give the same unto whom He pleaseth."

Another proof and argument which shines like a sun among proofs, is the steadfastness of that Eternal Beauty (BAB) in the Divine Cause. Although He was in the age of youth, yet without fear, and regardless of anyone He declared a matter contrary to the people of the earth, including the high and low, rich and poor, powerful and humble, king and subject. This has been heard by all. Could this be any other than the Divine Command and the confirmed Will of God? I swear by God, that should another entertain or think of such a matter, he would immediately be destroyed; and should ye place the heart of all the world in his heart, he still would not venture this important measure unless by Divine permission, or except his heart be united with the bounties of the Merciful and his soul confide in the supreme favors. To what do the people ascribe this? Do they attribute it to madness, just as they did with bygone prophets, or say

that He hath undertaken these things for outward leadership, and to possess the tinsel of the mortal world?

Praise be to God! In His first Book which He hath entitled " Ghayoumi Asma " (the " Self-Subsistent of the Names ")—the first, greatest and most mighty of all books—He prophesied His own martyrdom. In a certain place He hath mentioned this verse: "O Thou remnant of God, I have wholly sacrificed myself unto thee; I have been pleased with curses in Thy path, and have wished nothing except death in Thy love; whereunto only God the Exalted, the Defender, the Pre-existent is a sufficient witness! "

Likewise He craved martyrdom in " Tafsiri Ha " (" Interpretation of the letter H "), thus: " It is as if I heard a crier proclaiming in mine innermost heart—' Sacrifice thou in the path of God the thing which is most beloved by thee, even as Hosein (Peace be upon Him!) sacrificed Himself in My way '; and were I not regardful of this real mystery, by Him in whose Hand is my soul, even if all the kings of the earth were assembled, they could not take from me a single letter, how much less can such servants who are of no importance in this and are of those who are rejected? That all may know the degree of my patience, resignation and sacrifice in the path of God."

Could it be asserted that the author of these words walks in any other than the path of God, or hath desired aught else save His Good Pleasure? In this

verse, such a breeze of severance is hidden, that were it to blow, all the temples of existence would sacrifice life and relinquish soul. Consider the ignorance and extreme ingratitude of the people who have closed their eyes to all this and run after dead bodies ¹ from whose bellies proceed the lamentations of the property of the faithful. Yet what unwarranted accusations they bring against the Dawning-places of Holiness! Thus do We mention unto thee that which is wrought by the hands of those who disbelieve, and who turn away from the Meeting of God in the day of resurrection. God chastises them with the fire of their infidelity, and prepares for them a punishment in the hereafter whereby their bodies and souls are consumed. This is because they have said, "Verily, God is not powerful in anything, and His Hands are tied from bounty!" Steadfastness in the Cause is a great proof and mighty argument. The Seal of the Prophets hath said: "Two verses have made me old."² Both concern steadfastness in the Cause of God. It is said: "Be thou steadfast, for thus hast thou been commanded" (K. S. 11).

Consider how, in His tender youth, this Sadrat of the Divine Rizwan delivered the Cause of God, and what steadfastness appeared from that Beauty of Oneness. Though all upon the earth combined to suppress Him, it produced no result. The more harm they inflicted upon that Sadrat of Blessedness, the more His

¹ Referring to the Mullas and clergy.

² The other verse referred to is K. S. 6, quoted page 77.

fervor increased, and the fire of His love was enkindled. All these things are clear and no one denies them. Finally He surrendered His soul and hastened to the Supreme Friend.

Among the proofs of the Manifestation (BAB) were the power, domination and authority which proceeded from the person of that Manifestor of Existence and that Appearance of the Adored One throughout all regions of the earth. Although that Eternal Beauty appeared in Shiraz and removed the veil in the year "Sixty," yet in a short time the signs of the power, domination, sovereignty and authority of that Essence of essences and Ocean of oceans became so manifest throughout all countries, that from every city the traces, indications, evidences and tokens of that Heavenly Sun became visible. Many a pure and chaste heart became expressive of that Eternal Sun, and many a sprinkling of enlightenment from that Sea of Intuitional Knowledge encompassed the contingent beings. Though the divines and grandees in every city and town arose to reject and suppress them, girded up loins of envy, hatred and injustice to eradicate them, killed many a holy one who was the essence of justice, by the accusation of injustice, and destroyed with severest torment many a temple of spirit which showed forth pure knowledge and deeds; yet each one of these beings was occupied in the commemoration of God until the verge of death, and soared in the sky of submission and resignation. He so influenced and trans-

formed these beings that they had no purpose except His wish, and sought nothing but His command. They yielded to His good pleasure and attached their hearts to His thought.

Reflect a little; hath such a power and influence appeared from any other in the world? All these purified hearts and sanctified souls hastened with perfect resignation to the call of destiny. During occasions of complaint, nothing proceeded from them except thanksgiving, and in time of affliction, only submission was visible. It is an evident fact how much hatred, animosity and enmity the people of the earth entertained toward these companions, for they considered tormenting and oppressing those holy ideal countenances conducive to prosperity, salvation and everlasting success and gain. Hath such commotion appeared in the lands at any period from the age of Adam down to the present time, or such tumult been witnessed among the servants? Notwithstanding all their sufferings and injuries, they became the objects of the curses of the people and the subject of censure by all the servants. It seemed as if patience originated in the world of existence from their self-restraint, and faithfulness appeared in the regions of the earth from their actions.

Briefly: reflect upon all these events which have happened, and things which have come to pass, in order that thou mayest be aware of the greatness and importance of the Cause. Then the spirit of tran-

quillity will be breathed in thy being through the favor of the Merciful, and thou wilt rest and abide upon the throne of assurance. The One God testifies that were ye to reflect a little, ye would find that aside from all these established facts and mentioned proofs, the very cursing, execration and rejection by the people of the earth are the greatest proof and weightiest evidence of the truth of these heroes of the field of severance and resignation. When thou dost reflect upon the contradictions of the people, including divines, men of learning, and the ignorant, thou wilt become more firm and steadfast in this Cause; for whatever hath happened was previously prophesied by the Mines of Intuitional Knowledge and Sources of Eternal Command. Although this servant did not intend to speak of former records, yet out of love for your Honor We mention some traditions applicable to this place, although in reality there is no need to do so, for what hath already been stated is sufficient for the earth and all therein. In fact, all the Books and mysteries are contained in this brief account. If one should ponder a little, he will comprehend all the mysteries of the Divine words and facts which have appeared from that Ideal King, from what hath already been mentioned. But since the people are not in one degree and station, We cite some traditions in order to cause steadfastness in wavering souls and tranquillity in troubled minds; likewise the Divine proof may be perfected and completed to the servants both high and low.

Among them is the tradition, "When the standard of Truth shall appear, the people of the east and west will curse it." One should drink a little of the wine of severance, establish himself upon the seat of impregnability and observe: "One hour's reflection is better than seventy years of pious devotion," (to discover) the reason of this base action, that the people, notwithstanding declaration of love and search for Truth, curse the followers of the True One after the Appearance, as is evidenced in the tradition. It is clear that the reason is none other than the abrogation of customs, ceremonies, habits and rites by which the people are bound. For should that Beauty of the Merciful conform to the same customs and ceremonies, and approve that in which the people are engaged, then by no means would such disagreements and violence appear in the world. This blessed tradition is confirmed and substantiated by the saying: "The day whereon the herald shall summon (mankind) to an objectionable affair" (K. S. 54).

To resume: Since the Herald of Oneness from behind the Veils of Holiness summons people to be entirely severed from that which they hold, and since this Divine Call is contrary to their desire, therefore all such tests and trials occur.

Consider that the people never mention these well-founded traditions, all of which are fulfilled, but hold fast to those traditions the validity or non-validity of which is not known, asking why they are not fulfilled,

although even that which they have not imagined is fulfilled and hath appeared. The signs and tokens of the True One are as apparent as the sun in mid-heaven, yet people are bewildered in the desert of blindness and ignorance. Notwithstanding many of the Koranic verses and confirmed traditions indicate a new Law and Command, and a new Cause, they still await the promised Countenance to decree according to the law of the Koran; just as the Jews and Christians hold to the same saying. Among the texts pointing to a new Law and new Dispensation are the statements in the prayer of Nudba: "Where is the One who is preserved to renew the precepts and regulations? Where is the One who is chosen to reform the religion and law?" It is also said in the Zeyarat (visiting tablet written by Ali): "Peace be upon the new True One." Abu-Abd'Allah (sixth Imam) was asked concerning the character of the Mahdi: "What will be His character?" He answered: "He will do what was done by the Prophet of God (Mohammed) and He will destroy whatever hath been before Him, just as the Prophet of God abolished the matter of Jahileyh." ¹

Consider, notwithstanding similar traditions, how they have sought to prove the permanency of the ordinances, although the purpose of every Manifestation is the manifestation of change and transformation in

¹ The time of ignorance among the Pagan Arabs before Mohammed's appearance.

the regions of the world, publicly and privately, outwardly and inwardly. For if the affairs of the earth change not, the appearance of Universal Manifestations would be futile. It is said in "Awalim," which is one of the authoritative books, "A youth shall appear from Beni-Hashem (family of Mohammed) who will possess a new Book and new Laws"; then follows, "Most of his enemies will be the divines." In another place it is related that Sadik-Ebn-Mohammed said: "A youth shall appear from Beni-Hashem, and will command people to swear allegiance to Him; He shall possess a new Book; He will summon people to acknowledge a new Book which is onerous to the Arab. When you hear about Him, hasten to Him." How well have they carried out the testament of the Imams of Religion and Lights of Certainty! Although it is said: "If you hear of a youth of Beni-Hashem appearing, summoning people to a new Divine Book and new Supreme Laws, hasten unto Him," yet they gave verdict of infidelity and apostasy against that Lord of Existence and did not go unto that Hashemite Light and Divine Appearance except with drawn swords and hearts full of hatred. Moreover consider how plainly the enmity of the divines is mentioned in the Book. Notwithstanding all these clear and indicative traditions and evident and confirmed references, the people have turned away from the clear essence of Knowledge and utterance, and have advanced toward the appearances of error and sedition; and despite these revealed

words and recorded traditions, they say whatever is prompted by self. Should the Essence of Truth give an explanation which proves contrary to their egotism and desire, they will straightway charge Him with infidelity, saying, "this is contrary to the words of the Imams of the religion and of the manifest lights, and no such command or order hath been laid down in the irrefutable Law"; just as in the present day similar vain sayings proceed from these mortal temples. Now consider this tradition; how all these things have been formerly spoken of! In "Arbain" (book of tradition), it is recorded: "A youth shall appear from Beni-Hashem, possessing new laws; He will summon people, but none will respond to Him, and most of His enemies will be the divines. When He commands a thing, they shall not obey Him, but will say: 'This is contrary to that which we possess from the Imams of the religion'"; and so on to the end of the tradition. In this day, all repeat these same words, not knowing that His Holiness is seated upon the throne of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth," and is established upon the seat of "He commandeth whatsoever He desireth."

No understanding can comprehend the character of His Manifestation, and no knowledge grasp the measure of His mission. All sayings are dependent upon His approval, and all things are in need of His authority. All else save Him is created by His command and exists by His direction. He is the Manifestor of

the Divine Mysteries and the Elucidator of the Hidden Wisdoms of Eternity. Thus it is related in "Buhar'Ul-Anwar," "Awalim," and "Yanbou'a"¹ that Sadik-Ebn-Mohammed said: "Knowledge is twenty-seven letters. All that was brought of it by the Prophets were two letters, and until the present day, people only know these two letters; but when Gha'im shall arise, the twenty-five letters will appear."

Consider: He hath designated that Knowledge consists of twenty-seven letters, and all the prophets from Adam down to the "Seal" explained but two letters thereof, and were sent forth in these two. He also says Gha'im shall bring forth the remaining twenty-five letters. From this explanation realize the rank and station of His Holiness (BAB); that His rank is greater than all the Prophets and His mission loftier and higher than the knowledge and comprehension of all the Holy Ones. These worthless creatures measure with their limited minds, learnings and understanding, a matter of which the Prophets, Holy Ones and Chosen Ones have either not been informed, or which they have not declared because of an irrefutable Command of God, and finding it not in accord therewith, reject it. "Dost thou imagine that the greater part of them hear or understand? They are no other than like the brute cattle; yea, they stray more widely from the true path" (K. S. 25). To what do they apply the mentioned tradition which clearly indicates the

¹ Three authoritative books of tradition.

hidden facts and wonderful new events in the Day of His Holiness? These new events will cause the people to disagree to such an extent that the divines and religious doctors will sentence His Holiness and His companions to death, and all the people of the earth will arise in contradiction. Thus it is said in "Kafi," in the tradition by Jabir in the "Tablet of Fatima," concerning the Gha'im: "The perfection of Moses, the splendor of Jesus, and the patience of Job (shall be) in Him, and His friends shall be abased during His time, and their heads shall be just as the heads of the Turks and Deylamites were exchanged as presents; they shall be slain and burnt, terrified with fear, and appalled; the earth shall be dyed with their blood, and lamentation, and wailing shall prevail amongst their women; these are indeed my friends."

Now consider, there is not a single letter of this tradition which is not fulfilled, for their blessed blood was shed in most localities, they were made captives in every city, paraded through countries and towns, and some were burned. Nevertheless no one reflected that if the promised Gha'im should arise and appear according to the former laws and ordinances, why then have such traditions been recorded, and why should all these disagreements occur, so that the death of these companions should be considered obligatory and the persecution of these holy souls deemed conducive to the attainment of summits of Nearness?

Moreover, consider how these fulfilled events and

actions have been mentioned in former traditions; as it is said in the "Rouzeye-Kafi" in explanation of "Zora." In the "Rouzeye-Kafi" (it is related) of Mo'aweyeh-Ibn Wahab that Abi-Abdallah said: "Dost thou know Zora?" I said: "May I be a sacrifice to Thee? They say it is Baghdad?" He said: "No!" Then he added: "Hast thou entered the city of Rey¹?" "Yes," I replied. He enquired: "Hast thou visited the cattle-market?" "Yes!" "Hast thou seen the black mountain upon the right hand of the road? There is Zora where they will slay eighty men of the children of certain ones, all of whom are free from guilt." "Who will kill them?" I questioned. He said: "The children of Persia!"

This is the condition and state of the companions of His Holiness as described in former times. Consider, according to this tradition Zora is the land of Rey. In that place these companions were killed with the severest torture, and all these holy beings were martyred by the Persians as recorded in the tradition. This you have heard, and it is clear and evident to all the world. Why do not these worms of the earth reflect upon these traditions, all of which are as clear as the sun in mid-heaven? For what reason do they not advance toward the True One? And why on account of other traditions, the meaning of which they have not understood, have they turned aside from the

¹ Ancient city near which Teheran is built.

Manifestation of the True One, and from the Beauty of God, to abide in hell? These things only result from the denial by the religious doctors of the age, and by the divines of the time, of whom Sadik-Ibn-Mohammed hath said: "The religious doctors of that time will be the most wicked of the divines under the shadow of heaven. Corruption will issue from them and return again unto them."

We beg the doctors and divines of the Beyan not to act in like manner; not to inflict upon the Essence of Divinity, the Supreme Light, the Absolute Eternity, and the Origin and End of the Manifestations of the Invisible, at the time of Mustagath, that which hath been inflicted in this day; not to depend upon intellect, comprehension and learning, nor show hostility toward that Manifestor of Supreme Infinite Knowledges. Yet, notwithstanding all these admonitions, it is seen that a misleading person, who is a chief of the people, will arise with the utmost opposition. Likewise in every city, (people) will arise to suppress that Beauty of Holiness. The companions of that King of Existence and Essence of the Desired One will flee to mountains and deserts and conceal themselves from the hand of the oppressors, while some will resign themselves and yield life with entire severance. As already witnessed, one known and reputed for great piety and virtue, whom the people deem it their duty to obey, and to whose command they consider it necessary to submit, will war against that Root of the Di-

vine Tree and arise to oppose with the utmost strife and exertion. This is the quality of people!

To resume: We hope that the people of the Beyan may be trained; that they may soar in the atmosphere of spirit and abide in its court; that they may distinguish the True One from all others, and penetrate a false vestment with the eye of insight. But in these days such odor of jealousy is diffused, I swear by the Educator of Existence, including the seen and the unseen, that from the beginning of the foundation of the world—though it hath no beginning—to the present time, no such envy, animosity and hatred have appeared or ever will appear. For a number who have not inhaled the odor of justice, have hoisted banners of discord, and have agreed to oppose this servant. From every direction a spear is visible and from every side an arrow flies. This, although We have not gloried in any matter, nor have We sought superiority over any. To every one We have been a most affectionate companion and a most forbearing and indulgent friend; with the poor We have been as the poor, and before the learned and lofty, perfectly submissive and resigned. Yet by God, than Whom there is no other God, the hardships, calamities and sufferings inflicted by the enemies and possessors of the Book are as nothing compared to what hath been inflicted by the believers (Babis) .

To be brief: what shall We say? For were the world just, it could not endure this recital. As this

servant, upon His arrival in this land (Baghdad), became aware, in part, of events which would subsequently happen. We took Our departure before that time, repaired to deserts of solitude and spent two years in the wilderness of isolation. Fountains were flowing from Our eyes and seas of blood streaming from Our heart. Many a night We were destitute of food and many a day the body found no rest. Notwithstanding these showering afflictions and successive calamities—by the One in Whose Hand is our Soul—We continued in perfect happiness and exceeding joy, for We were not aware of the loss or benefit, health or ailment of any. We were occupied with Ourselves and detached from all else. But the noose of the decree of God is wider than reflection and the arrow of His destiny is sanctified from plan. The head hath no release from His noose and there is no escape from His desire except by submission. We swear by God that We had no intention of return from this exile nor hope of reunion after this journey. Our only purpose was to avoid being an object of disagreement among the Ahbab, a source of disturbance among the companions, the cause of injury to any one, or the occasion of sorrow in any heart. We had no other intention and object than those mentioned, yet every individual formed an opinion and idea according to his own desire. Finally the decree of return emanated from the Source of Command and We involuntarily obeyed and returned.

The pen is unable to record that which was experienced after Our return. For two years enemies have exerted their utmost effort and endeavor to destroy this humble servant, as all are informed. Nevertheless not one of the Ahbab hath rendered assistance, nor offered help. Nay rather, instead of assistance, successive and continuous sorrows like pouring rain are inflicted by words and deeds, while this servant is ready, life in hand, with all resignation, that perchance through Divine providence and favor this well-known and mentioned Letter may be sacrificed in the path of the Point and the Exalted Word. Were it not for this intention—by the One at Whose command the Spirit giveth utterance—We would not have tarried one moment in this city, “Whereunto God is sufficient witness.” We conclude the saying with “There is no power and strength but in God alone.” . . . “We belong to God, and unto Him shall we surely return” (K. S. 2).

The possessors of intelligence who have drunk from the choice Wine of love and have taken no step to gratify self, witness the proofs, evidence and argument which indicate this wonderful Cause and impregnable Divine Manifestation clearer than the sun in the Fourth Heaven. Now consider the turning away of the people from the Divine Beauty and their advancement toward egotistical desire. Notwithstanding all these sound verses and substantial references as recorded in the “Greatest Weight” (Koran), which

is the Divine Trust among the servants; and notwithstanding these clear traditions which are more explicit than explanation and elucidation, yet the people have ignored and rejected them all, clinging to the outward sense of some traditions which they have not found consistent with their own understanding, and the meaning of which they have not comprehended. Thus are they bereft of the wine of the Glorious One and the everflowing fountain of the Beauty of the Eternal One.

Consider, even the date of the Manifestation of that Essence of Light hath been recorded in the traditions, yet they are not mindful, nor severed a single breath from selfish desire.

In the tradition, Al-Mofazzal questioned Sadek: "O my Master, how will be (the sign of) His Manifestation?" Then he answered: "In the year sixty, His Cause shall appear and His mention shall be elevated."

To resume: It is astonishing that with such evident and obvious references, these servants have avoided the Truth. For example, mention of the sorrow, affliction and imprisonment inflicted upon that Essence of Divine Nature hath been made in the former traditions. In "Buhar"¹: "In our Gha'im there are four signs from four Prophets, Moses, Jesus, Joseph and Mohammed. As to the sign from Moses, fear and anticipation; from Jesus that which was said in His behalf; from Joseph imprisonment and pious

¹ A book of Mohammedan authoritative traditions.

dissimulation; from Mohammed that He will appear with signs like unto the Koran." Notwithstanding such a sound tradition which mentions all the events just as they have transpired, no one hath become mindful, nor do We suppose they will henceforth become so, excepting those whom thy Lord wisheth. "Verily, God shall cause him to hear whom He pleaseth; but I shall not make those to hear who are in graves."

It hath been evident to your Honor that the Birds of Divinity and Doves of Eternity have two utterances. One they reveal according to the outward, without allegory, covering or veil, that it may be a guiding lamp and beckoning light by which wayfarers may reach the summits of holiness, and seekers be led to the court of Union. Such are the clear records and evident verses already mentioned. The other utterance they reveal in veil and covering to expose that which the malicious have concealed in their hearts and disclose their innermost beings. Therefore it is said by Sadek-Ibn-Mohammed, "God will purge them and sift them." This is the Divine balance and the eternal touchstone wherewith He tests His servants. No one comprehendeth the meanings of these utterances except tranquil hearts, approved souls and abstracted minds. In similar utterances the literal meaning understood by people is not intended. Thus it is said: "Every knowledge hath seventy senses, of which one only is known among the people; but when the Gha'im shall arise, He will spread the remaining senses among

men." Likewise it is said: "We speak one word and by it We intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these we can explain."

To resume: These things are mentioned that the people may not be troubled by certain traditions and utterances, the signs of which have not appeared in the world of dominion, but that they may attribute their perplexity to their own lack of comprehension and not to the non-fulfilment of the meanings of the traditions; for the intent of the Imams of religion is not known to these servants, as evidenced by the traditions themselves. Consequently the people should not deprive themselves of the bounties through such texts, but should question the custodians thereof, so that the hidden mysteries may appear and become manifest free from veils.

But no one is found among the people of the earth who is a seeker of the Truth, and who turns to the Manifestations of Oneness, concerning intricate questions. All are dwelling in the land of oblivion and follow the people of hostility and rebellion. But God will do unto them just as they are acting, and will forget them even as they have ignored His Meeting in His Days. Thus those who have denied are judged, and He shall judge those who reject His signs. We conclude the saying with His words (Exalted is He!)—"Whosoever shall withdraw from the admonition of the Merciful, we will chain a devil to him, and he shall be his inseparable companion" (K. S. 43).

“ Whosoever turns aside from my admonition, verily, he shall lead a miserable life ” (K. S. 20).

Thus it hath been formerly revealed, were ye of those who reason.

Revealed from the “ B ” and the “ H ” (BAHA).

Peace be upon those who hear the melody of the Dove in the Sadrat-El-Muntaha!

Glory be to our Lord, the Supreme!

GLOSSARY

Ahbab—Literally “beloved ones.” Title by which the followers of the BAB and BAHA’U’LLAH are designated.

Ama’a—According to the Illuminati-Platonic philosophers, this term signifies one of the worlds of abstraction.

Ascent—Denotes the Ascent of Mohammed to the station of “Meeting” in the Kingdom of Heavens.

Babis—Followers of the BAB, previous to the declaration of BAHA’U’LLAH.

Baha or Beha—Literally “Glory,” “Splendor,” “Light,” etc., The Greatest Name of God. The title BAHA’U’LLAH was first given by the BAB. Although rendered “Beha” in most of the writings upon this Revelation, the form of English spelling which will most nearly reproduce the Persian pronunciation is “Baha.” The first vowel is almost silent; the accent is on the second syllable—which has the sound of a in father. The u has the sound of oo; the primary accent is on the last syllable—Llah. Thus we have in BAHA’U’LLAH a compound word of four syllables accented on the second and last syllables. This form of spelling has received the approval of Abdul-Baha.

Beni Hashem—The family out of which Mohammed arose.

Beyan—Literally "Utterance." This name was given by the BAB to His Revelations, particularly to the Book of His Laws, etc.

Cacba—The ancient house at Mecca, which has been a place of pilgrimage from time immemorial. It was formerly a temple of idols worshipped by the Sabeans.

"*Endowed with Constancy*"—A title given to Prophets who revealed a Book and instituted religious laws.

Fourth Heaven—According to the old system of astronomy, this is the Heaven in which the sun moves. As a Bahai term it signifies the Religion of Christ, which is the fourth among religious systems.

Gha'im—Literally "one who arises." This term is applied by Mohammed to a subsequent Manifestation, just as the Israelitish prophets spoke of a subsequent Manifestation as "Messiah."

Heavenly Books—Revealed words of all the prophets, such as the Bible, the Koran, the Zend Avesta, etc.

Hegira—Literally "migration." The basis of Mohammedan chronology. It is about thirteen years after the rise of Mohammed, at which time He left Mecca and migrated to Medina.

Hijaz—Southwestern Arabia. It is used by BAHÁ'U'LLAH to symbolize the Arabic language.

Ighan—Assurance, Certainty.

Imam—A priest, saint, or religious leader, after the departure of Mohammed.

Imamat—The mission of the Twelve Imams of the Shi'ite School.

Irak—A large province of Persia. It is used by BAHÁ'U'LLAH to symbolize the Persian language.

Islam—Literally "to resign one's self." The name given by Mohammed to His religion and its followers.

Israfil—The Angel who sounds the trumpet at the Judgment Day.

Kawther—A fountain in Paradise. The Bahai interpretation is the "fountain of Divine Knowledge."

K. S.—Koran Surat.

Mahdi—The title of the subsequent Manifestation.

Mustagath—Symbolizes the year or term appointed by the BAB for the appearance of "He whom God shall manifest," i.e., BAHÁ'U'LLAH.

Parasang—A Persian road-measure.

Preserved Tablet—A tablet which contains the knowledge of all there was, is, and will be.

Red Support—Implies the Religion of BAHÁ'U'LLAH reddened by the blood of martyrs.

Rizwan—The name of the custodian of Paradise. BAHÁ'U'LLAH uses it to denote Paradise itself in the sense that Paradise is the Good-Pleasure of God.

Sadrat'Ul-Muntaha—The name of a tree planted by the Arabs in ancient times at the end of a road, to

serve as a guide. As a symbol it denotes a Manifestation in His Day.

Salsabile—A fountain in Paradise.

Seal of the Prophets—One of the titles of Mohammed.

Seventh Sphere—The highest of the seven firmaments, according to the old system of astronomy. This term symbolizes the Religion of BAHA'U'LLAH, which is the seventh among the great religions. BAHA'U'LLAH interprets "Heaven" as "Religion" and the "Divine Will."

Shi'ites—One of the two main schools of Islam.

Surat—Name of the books or chapters of the Koran.

Walayat—Literally "guardianship." The mission or office of the one appointed by a Prophet to be a guardian over that religious community.

White Path—As a symbol, means the Religion of God.

